PRACTICAL SALESMANSHIP

NATHANIEL C. FOWLER JR.

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PRACTICAL SALESMANSHIP

A TREATISE ON THE

ART OF SELLING GOODS

BY

NATHANIEL C. FOWLER, JR.

Author of "Starting in Life," "Gumption," "The Boy — How to Help Him Succeed," etc.

ASSISTED BY
TWENTY-NINE EXPERT SALESMEN, SALES-MANAGERS
AND PROMINENT BUSINESS MEN

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A WORD AT THE START

The art, or science, or practice of salesmanship cannot be taught academically or automatically, or by book, lesson, or teacher. The concrete vocations, — bookkeeping, stenography, typewriting, and the clerical or mechanical side of business, — may be wholly or partially imparted by book or lesson; but the practice of a vocational art, which does not depend upon definite rules, cannot be driven into anybody by rote or regulation.

While salesmanship is not independent of basic principles, and while it is dependent upon unwritten, if not written, law, its action is so closely allied to personality that it cannot be presented either by chart or table of rules.

Therefore, the author attempts to present the great principles and ethics of salesmanship, a study and analysis of them, in a way which he hopes will be helpful, practical, and profitable; and all that he says is interwoven and supplemented with the experience of active authorities, who have given the larger part of their lives to selling, on the road, or behind the counter, or to the management of salesmen and saleswomen.

Every word in the book represents composite experience, and not the mere opinions or training of the author himself. From out of a mass of experience, his own and others', he has attempted to present word pictures of business fact.

TO WOMEN READERS OF THIS BOOK

For convenience, and only for convenience, the masculine noun and pronoun have been used in this book; but every word in it is intended for women as well as for men.

Custom, as well as convenience, suggests this form.

The constant mention of both sexes would be confusing and require unnecessary repetition.

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PRACTICAL SALESMANSHIP

WHAT IS SALESMANSHIP?

The salesman was born at the birth of trade. Business-doing of every kind appears to be impossible without the intervention of salesmen or of some personal action which stands for salesmanship.

The customer, whether he be the jobber, the distributer, the retailer, the peddler, or the consumer, may know what he wants, and he may be aware also that he cannot live or do business without buying something of somebody. But for some reason, or, rather, from what would ethically and scientifically appear to be lack of reason, he may not order the goods or supplies, or he may buy less of them, unless somebody solicits his trade and tells him what to do, or forces him to do, what necessity and common sense make necessary for living or for doing business.

Theoretically it would appear to be an unnatural condition of business, which makes it necessary for the buyer to be told what he should buy, rather than to do it of his own volition. But whether this be so or not, this condition has always existed, still maintains, and will continue to be, until civilization passes further up the road to perfection, when selling will be done by

waiters and not by coaxers of trade. When this time arrives, a large part of the machinery of business will be unnecessary, and the strain of trade reduced to the minimum.

But to-day, with or without reason, the selling of practically everything, from goods on the counter to steamships and locomotives, is a direct or indirect result of solicitation, either by personal application or by the silent salesman known as advertising, and generally by the use of both.

For the present, the solicitor, drummer, or salesman is one of the foundation stones of commercialism, without which it appears impossible to build and maintain the business structure.

There are many definitions of salesmanship. Here is one:

Salesmanship is a personal face-to-face action or effort on the part of an individual which is intended to bring about the sale of the goods for sale.

And here is another:

More broadly speaking, salesmanship is the art of selling something to somebody, and everything which contributes to the consummation of this exchange is necessarily a part of salesmanship.

Salesmanship differs from demonstration in that the latter may not include the former, and it is like demonstration because good salesmanship usually includes some form of demonstration.

Considered wholly from a commercial point of view,

salesmanship consists of personal solicitation, the salesman and the customer meeting face to face. In this book I am so considering it, and am not attempting to bring into the argument any kind of selling action beyond face-to-face solicitation and those things directly pertaining to it.

Salesmanship is not unlike the plea of the lawyer before the court or the jury. Both contain arguments; and, in both cases, the presentator, either of arguments or of goods or of both, is attempting to make the party addressed do what he asks him to do.

On the one hand there is something for sale, whether it be a life insurance policy, an automobile, a suit of clothes, or a barrel of potatoes. The owner of what is for sale, or his representative, desires to get rid of what he has, to transfer it or sell it to somebody who wants it or can be made to want it.

To do this, he employs every method which will in any way influence the buyer, including printed matter, advertising, well-arranged warerooms, handsome office fittings, and, most important of all, a proper presentation of the thing for sale by an individual commercially known as a salesman, who adds personality and voice to the selling argument.

The salesman exists for two reasons: first, custom; secondly, because it is obvious that even the best informed buyer cannot know everything, and the well-posted salesman is in a position to give him information about the article for sale.

There is opportunity for a discussion man-to-man, and for the presentation of argument; and this information and these arguments cannot be given with any degree of fullness by the printed page or advertisement. Or, if they could be, they would not even then take the place of personal information-giving and custom-made argument.

Salesmanship cannot be analyzed with chemical or other exactness. To define it, to separate it into its component parts, would be as difficult as it would be to analyze ability and to tell what it consists of.

Yet we all know what salesmanship is, and we are able to measure the results of its qualities and quantities.

The art of salesmanship includes several fundamental elements, phases, or parts, which, consolidated, make a salesman. These I have considered in chapters by themselves. I will, however, briefly and collectively discuss them here.

The first-class salesman, whether he is behind the counter, on the floor, or on the road, whether he peddles books or sells furniture, is proficient along the following lines:

First, he knows his goods. No seller of goods, who is unfamiliar with them, can sell them to full advantage. I know of a few expert salesmen who have closed large deals without an intimate knowledge of the goods they sell, and I know of two or three men, in particular, drawing or earning large salaries as salesmen, who are woefully, and almost criminally, ignorant of their

wares, yet are able to consummate larger sales than ninety per cent of thoroughly posted salesmen. These men are natural geniuses, pre-eminent traders, who seem to be able to sell anything at any time to anybody.

Secondly, the ability to describe or talk the goods. Many a man with an intimate knowledge in the premises, one both technical and broad, fails because he does not know how to talk. It is obvious that all the knowledge in the world is worthless unless it is distributed. The man of knowledge, and not of tongue or of pen, is about as badly off in business as would be the man of voice only, with nothing back of it. The commercial value of what we know is dependent upon our distribution or use of it. If we do not know how to talk our wares, we cannot readily sell, and we have no right to be members of the selling craft.

Thirdly, a general knowledge of business principles. There are salesmen who can only sell goods, possessing no real business ability beyond that of selling. Some of them succeed moderately, but few of them become great salesmen. I am convinced that a general knowledge of business, or some ability to manipulate business, is essential to good salesmanship or to best salesmanship.

Fourthly, a working familiarity with the business methods and action of one's competitors. To successfully and continuously consummate trade, and to be able to overcome expected and unexpected obstacles, one must not be unfamiliar with the methods used by those in the same line of business.

Fifthly, the ability to talk something besides "shop." To do this requires a knowledge of things in general. Practically all successful salesmen are reservoirs of general information about business and of matters outside of business; and this information, always ready for immediate delivery, permits them to be both agreeable and profitable to their customers. It materially assists in making a good impression.

Sixthly, the ability to diagnose the customer, or, in the language of the street, "to size-up the other fellow." Unless one is able to do this, to some degree, at least, he cannot hope to be more than a mediocre success, on the road or behind the counter; and he stands as little chance of winning the battle of trade as does the commanding officer of an army who meets his enemy without a knowledge of its strength or proportions.

While the ability to judge men and customers, to diagnose and to size-up, is the one thing which stands between the great salesman and one of ordinary capacity, I am not willing to say that diagnosing is the most important element of all. It is a necessary one, and no one can succeed without some of it. Those who possess it to a marked degree belong to the upper grade of the upper class, and those who have little of it are pretty close to the bottom.

Seventhly, good-nature. Comparatively few morose, over-dignified, cold, and chilly salesmen have amounted to anything. It is possible for them to sell goods when the buyer is as anxious to buy as the seller is to sell,

but they are practically worthless at the initiative, and are seldom able to obtain or to hold any trade worth having. Some managers look upon good-nature as the most important requirement of all. Whether it is or not, it is a fact that without it great success is impossible.

Eighthly, that ability to play a double part, to interest and benefit the customer while being thoroughly faithful and profitable to the house one represents. Salesmen holding permanent trade never forget the customer's interest, and yet they always work for the benefit of their own house.

Unless a salesman is both pleasing and profitable to the customer, he will not continue to do business, nor will he be permitted to hold his position if his sales are not profitable to the house he represents.

Of course, there are many other elements which contribute mightily to salesmanship, such as persistency, faithfulness, promptness, and the like, without which one may not hope to succeed at anything. These I have attempted to cover in other chapters.

Which is the most important of the eight points of selling? The answer is of little moment. The proficient salesman possesses them all, not in their fullness or perfection, because that is impossible. Most salesmen are strong in one direction and weak in others. They have not selling balance. All of these attainments play leading parts on the stage of salesmanship, and their relative positions are of little consequence. They do not compete with one another.

The successful salesman is a natural trader. He is fond of selling. He likes to meet competition, and loves to overcome obstacles. He is a fighter, a strategist.

Without this natural ability, more than ordinary success is impossible. Nobody can make of himself what he is not. The power of self-creation does not exist. If one possesses no trading capacity, he can never sell many goods to anybody anywhere. But even a little ability may be developed into what amounts to about the same as much ability. On the other hand, great natural capacity is worth little unless trained by experience and persistency, that everlasting stick-to-it-iveness which turns failure into success.

Ordinary selling ability can undoubtedly be developed and trained sufficiently to make its possessor reasonably successful upon the road or behind the counter.

Goods seldom sell themselves. They have to be personally and satisfactorily presented. Nearly all of them are in duplicate. The purchaser can usually obtain the same thing at the same price somewhere else. Competition is confined partly to the reputation of the house and to the ability of the salesman, and not altogether to the quality of the goods offered for sale.

The individuality and personality of the salesman, who for the time being is the firm itself, — his ability and perseverance, — are really the principal factors in the consummation of trade, assuming, of course, that

the reputation of the firm is high and the goods of acceptable quality.

Would I advise one to become a salesman who could not meet all of these requirements? Yes, if he was not altogether inefficient, and had confidence and a willingness to put his shoulder to the business wheel and to PUSH. Few of us may hope to reach the flush of success. It then becomes our duty to take up the thing we can do the best, however poorly that may be.

One may succeed in a moderate way at selling goods, or in any other line, without being properly balanced. If he be deficient to a marked degree in many of the things which go to make good salesmanship, there is probably some other field of endeavor which better suits his capacity.

The top of salesmanship has never been fully occupied, and there will always be room at the top. Comparatively few ever reach it. There are many grades below the top, and all of them, except the lowest, offer a living, and often a good living.

If you like to sell goods, and you possess some ability in that direction, there is no reason why you should not become a salesman, unless there is something which you like as well or better and can do as well or better.

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF SELLING

THERE is a psychological or an inner scientific reason for every action, for everything which contributes to every movement of every kind, even to thought itself. Nothing exists without a source, a creative beginning; and everything is subject to some law, known, partly known, unknown, or mysterious.

I do not propose to enter the depths of psychology, because this science, — which, by many, is looked upon as the coming scientific basis of all science, — is yet an only slightly solved riddle; and much of what is known of it should not be presented, unless clothed in the garb of purely scientific term and analysis.

We know that it exists and has definite and immutable laws; yet we have not been able to deeply analyze it or to separate it into all of its component parts.

The time will come, however, when this fundamental science will be universally studied, and the good of its secrets will be known and usable by the people at large.

To-day, psychology is a growing science. It is still in its cradle, and has not learned to walk save with faltering steps. We are still in the psychological foothills, but sufficiently advanced to at least attempt to analyze it with hope of being able to apply it somewhat to the important movements of life, including business-doing.

Opposed to psychology, to the theoretical, and to scientific reason, is what is known as "common practice," which, for the time being, may occupy a more important place, or, rather, seem to do so, in active life.

Until we become civilized, and have our minds under accurate command, we shall be unable to fully apply the inner virtues of any science or art, and will, to an extent, depend upon results or what seem to be results; and, if they are satisfactory or appear to be, we shall be likely to work backwards instead of forwards, allowing results to steer us, if they are apparently satisfactory.

Let me give a concrete, and yet humble, example of practice out-generaling science, of result pre-empting scientific reason.

Some years ago, an inventive genius constructed what is known as a double-runner. This contrivance consisted of two sleds, fastened to a board, the forward one being on a pivot and capable of being steered by a wheel, ropes, or by out-riggers, held by the man in front.

This inventor applied science to the making of an almost perfect coasting machine. The runners were double-shod and absolutely true. Between the forward end of the board and the steering sled were roller-bearings, and the whole was steered with a wheel. There were no ball-bearings in those days. Everything was balanced to the equipoise of successful nicety. A better and more scientifically constructed coaster had never been produced.

The inventor, proud of his creation, offered to race any double-runner of any size or kind. A hill was selected. Thousands watched the contest, which resulted in the defeat of this marvelously constructed racing machine.

A man weighing two hundred pounds, who did not know anything about science, fastened two big sleds to a long and heavy plank, without making any effort towards trueness or accuracy. The whole affair was crude and out of adjustment, but it weighed twice as much as the scientifically-made double-runner; the owner weighed fifty pounds more than the inventor, and he put twenty fat men on board.

Weight won the victory over science. The clumsy machine greatly out-distanced the one built upon scientific lines.

Had this contest occurred in a vacuum, or had both the double-runners been of equal weight, including the passengers, science would have been in the van. Instead of this, the "weight of practice," opposed to theory and science, came in ahead.

This condition, for the present, somewhat applies to our imperfect way of doing things, and true science and high art do not always occupy the front row; but, sooner or later, real science and art, including an understanding of psychology, will enable truth to win in every contest, and brute-force will play no part on the stage of life.

This present condition, however, gives no excuse for

not attempting to understand the science of every-day things and of business, although we cannot fully comprehend them; nor should we object to digging deep into science and to applying it up to the reach of our intelligence.

The selling proposition, briefly, is as follows: The salesman has something to sell, and it is his duty to get somebody to buy it. It is a battle of quality of goods and quality of salesmen with the buyer who is the opposing or objecting force.

These two conditions, or men, meet face to face, the salesman finding it necessary to take the initiative, to fire the first shot, so to speak; the other side, the buyer, having the pre-eminent right to remain passive, or to act on the defensive, or to allow the selling-shot to take effect.

Pure civilization, and the higher ethics of life, would probably refuse to recognize the art of salesmanship, and would not consider it a part of life's economics or necessity. It would require that the salesman, instead of expending ninety per cent of his energy, that he might consummate trade by the use of every kind of pressure, should become a demonstrator, an expert, a talking lexicon, a source of information, that the buyer may use him for what he knows, not for what he can do. The buyer, then, would come to the goods, and the salesman would deliver a lecture upon them and answer questions. Beyond this salesmanship would not go.

Against this is present fact or conditions. Notwithstanding that every buyer knows that he must purchase, knows that he wants the goods that he buys, or should know it, he may not purchase anything, except necessities, unless under pressure.

Every salesman will tell you that from fifty to eighty-five per cent of his sales would not have occurred if it were not for the selling efforts he made. This statement must not be construed to mean that business would be reduced from fifty to eighty-five per cent, but the specific business coming to any one firm would be cut as stated if salesmen were not employed.

It is also a fact that, although the buyer would do a certain amount of purchasing anyway, the output of all goods, taking them as they run, would be very much less, — nobody knows how much less, — if salesmen were not generally employed.

There is something wrong and unnatural about this, but so long as it exists, it must be met.

The necessities of life are few. Custom, rather than necessity or refinement, is responsible for about seventy-five per cent of everything sold, except eatables. People buy partly because they want to excel somebody else or to have what others have.

For years simplicity has appeared to be almost a lost art. To-day we are doing double the business which any civilized nation would think of doing; and not only are we foolish in the purchase of useless luxuries, but we are making necessities of things which

can play no part in either economy or refinement and which have nothing to do with real progress.

But we must take things as they are, not as we would have them.

There are few goods which are not duplicated in quality and quantity. Few salesmen have anything which is exclusively their own. The sinking of any one house, or the annihilation of any one salesman, would hardly make a ripple on the sea of trade.

Why is it that one salesman succeeds where another fails, with identical goods, identical prices, and identical demand? Simply because one salesman has a certain faculty of presenting his wares and of subjecting the buyer to his personal influence.

If the purchaser were perfectly sane, and knew his business, the salesman would be unnecessary, and personality would not count for much in selling, for most of it could be done by mail or through demonstrators. But the present buyer is very human and does not see straight, any more than other people do. He is in a condition to be directed, and the salesman who succeeds understands how to direct others and how to make them do what, perhaps, they would not do if they were let alone.

I do not mean to say that the salesman absolutely controls the buyer, that he exercises what is falsely called a hypnotic influence over him, that in his hands the buyer is powerless and must do what the salesman tells him to do. Except in a few instances, no

salesman possesses this power in any degree of fullness; yet the good salesman has some of it, and is able by personality and argument to bring the buyer into a purchasing mood, to make him buy, then and there, when, perhaps, he would postpone the purchase or give the order to some other house.

There is another element which plays a mighty part in selling: the average buyer does not usually want to buy, or says he does not, or thinks he does not, — and usually he says he does not want to buy whatever his intention may be. The salesman, then, has before him a wall of opposition, even when the buyer has made up his mind to purchase. Not only must he present the right goods and the right prices, but he must possess that unanalyzable ability to make the buyer do what he may not voluntarily do or what he would postpone doing. This ability may be considered the fundamental bottom of good salesmanship under present conditions.

Even the woman in front of the counter, with her mind fully made up to purchase, may go to another store, or may decide to wait a day or two, if she and the salesman antagonize each other, or if she is not pleased with the salesman's manner or methods. And, further, a large proportion of retail purchasers may be made to buy more if the salesman understands how to sell. It is a fight, a battle of wits, the buyer starting in ahead of the game, the salesman to win in the end if he can. However much the buyer may

want to purchase, the salesman should want to sell him more than he wants to buy; and unless the salesman keeps this fact in mind, and realizes that it is more difficult to sell the customer than it is for the customer to buy of him, he will make only mediocre sales.

It is true that no one salesman can handle all customers with equal success. The customer has his preferences, and no one possesses all of the necessary qualifications.

The buyer may refuse to adapt himself to the seller. The seller must adapt himself to the buyer. The buyer will not take the initiative, as a rule. The salesman must always take it. The buyer will not advise the salesman or attempt to help him. The salesman must both advise and help the buyer. The buyer is always, or almost always, an opposing factor. He has a right to occupy this position, because he is paying out his money, while the salesman is taking it in.

It is a duel, the buyer occupying the preferred position and permitted to fire first.

The salesman, if he would be successful, must meet this opposition, bind up his wounds if he is hit, and proceed with his business.

It is believed by many that the fundamental basis or bottom of ability comes prenatally, and that success in any line is impossible unless one is born, so to speak, into the work.

I do not propose to minimize the value of inherited tendencies, or to claim that prenatal influences do not play a part in life; but I wish to state with all the earnestness in my power that inheritance is worth mighty little in any market unless the possessor of it does something to develop it and to adapt it to himself and to his conditions.

No man ever succeeded in anything, whether he had natural ability or not, who did not make an affort to use what Nature had given him.

Take the voice, for instance. It is probable that the great vocalist had nothing to do with the natural quality of his vocal organs, yet his success is due as much to the training of his voice as to the original quality of the voice itself.

There are natural salesmen, those who seem to be able to sell under all conditions; but these men did not reach superlative success without study, experiment, and experience.

There are those who have not any natural selling capacity. They can never become great on the road or behind the counter; but, if they try hard, and let no opportunity for improvement slip by them, it is quite likely that they can do fairly well in the selling side of business.

I cannot say, however, that I would advise one without much selling ability to attempt to become a salesman, unless he has reason to believe that he will do as well in that, however poorly he may do, as he

would be likely to do in something else. But the man who does not know how to sell, and really cannot learn after the most strenuous effort, who finds selling obnoxious, had better go into something else.

If your goods and prices are right and you do not succeed, there is something the matter with your natural ability or you have not properly developed or trained it. If you find the most careful training and the most earnest efforts do not avail, then you may properly decide that you do not possess that something necessary for successful salesmanship.

Remember that you cannot reconstruct the buyer, that he will continue to do as he pleases. If necessary, you must reconstruct yourself to meet him, or else fail. It is useless to find fault with the customer. You cannot reform him or make him over, but you may to some extent make yourself over, or, at any rate, so train your ability that it will be able to accomplish something and give you all the success your capacity entitles you to have. But, before you decide that salesmanship is objectionable, test yourself most carefully, because what you call inability may be sheer laziness.

Most people can sell goods if they make up their minds to do so, and many of them, even poor salesmen, can do better at selling than at anything else.

Fundamentally your success as a salesman does not wholly depend upon the house you work for, nor altogether upon the grade of the goods you sell, nor

entirely upon the demand for them; but in your ability to make people buy things, and to do it without apparently forcing them to do so.

While in the heat of selling, if you would be successful, you must be stronger than the buyer in front of you. Otherwise you will not consummate more than a few sales.

If you have this ability, you can train it into a great business asset. If you have not much of it, you can do something, provided you make up your mind to do it, and provided your common sense and judgment tell you that selling is the best thing for you to do.

WHAT SALESMANSHIP OFFERS

Salesmanship is by many considered the most important part of business-doing. Whether it is or not, it appears to be absolutely indispensable. No business is done without the intervention of some sort of salesmanship, whether it consists of the soliciting letter or of the human solicitor.

There are four great divisions of business, subdivided as many times as you please: the man who makes something or superintends the making of it; the man who manages the business, finances it, creates and maintains its policy, but does no actual handwork; the man who attends to the purely clerical part of it; and the man who carries the goods to the customer and is present at the consummation of sales.

The maker of the goods, unless he be the proprietor, is not always adequately recognized, because he has little to do with the direct disposition of the output. Theoretically he is the most important of all, because he creates, but he can do his work without an initiative display of enterprise and without using strenuous methods.

The clerical worker or bookkeeper should be respected far more than he is, for without him business would be impossible. But as he does not directly

bring in the profits and is not on the firing line, he is not always able to present tangible evidence of his worth to the business. He is, to an extent, like the cook in the camp. He is responsible for good health, digestion, and even life, but the world seems to think more of the forager who goes out into the open and brings something back with him. The bookkeeper plants and does not harvest.

The salesman is directly concerned with the profit-getting of the concern. He is the profit-maker. He is in the limelight all of the time. What he does can be seen and measured. If he sells a certain bill of goods at a certain price he can place that transaction on the firm's blackboard, there to be seen and appreciated. He has brought in just so much measurable profit. Perhaps this business would have come anyway, but it is a fact, nevertheless, that it came through him. For this reason he is in a position to expect and to command promotion.

Every day he may have an opportunity to make a record for himself which can be written out in cold figures. Others may be doing more work, and really contributing more to the up-building of the business, but none of them can show daily records of success or failure. What they do, while it may be appreciated, cannot always be measured as can the product of salesmanship.

The salesman is the only one who continuously meets the great outside, whether he be behind the

counter or on the road. He, above all others, comes in contact with living and active conditions. He sees the world. He has constant opportunity to learn about men and things. He is forced to meet competition and opposition, not theoretically, but to come face to face with it.

His fighting qualities are marshaled into line. He stands and walks while he works, while others remain seated. He is in the active side of trade, the side which moves and does the things most seen. He is in the midst of experience, and cannot help absorbing it, unless he is a fool. He has a better opportunity, as business runs, than have the members of any other department of trade.

The fact that the majority of our merchant princes, and other men of business mark, have been salesmen, and rose from salesmanship to the command of business, indicates that the salesman has the best opportunity to reach the top round of the ladder.

It is true that great captains of industry have sprung from other than salesmen, but the vast majority of them sold goods. Many a bookkeeper has risen to the head of the firm, and the foreman of the repair shop may go to any height; but the majority of business men of success sold goods and earned their reputations by the quality of their salesmanship.

I am not depreciating the clerical or the manufacturing sides of business, because able men will succeed anyway, if given half an opportunity, but

there is probably more chance of success in the selling department than there is in any other for the man of activity, for the man who is willing to work, and for the man who is able to meet competition and opposition.

If one cares only for a quiet life, if he is not ambitious, if he is satisfied to let well enough alone, if he would rather float with the stream instead of struggling against it, he has no right to enter the selling side of business.

But if one is willing to both give and take, to both float and swim, and is strong enough not to be overcome with present disaster and with constant opposition, and if he enjoys the storms of life, winning or losing as may be his turn, but winning more often than losing, then salesmanship offers him more than he is likely to receive from any other department of trade, and will give him better opportunity to round himself out into the successful man of business.

KNOWING YOUR GOODS

One of the best salesmen in America, if one may reckon selling ability by the aggregate of profitable sales, knew next to nothing about the goods he sold, and yet he seemed to be able to handle any kind of a selling proposition, and he earned or received a salary of $10,000 a year. His ignorance was not concealed. In fact, he made no effort to cover it up; and, what is more remarkable, he sold goods of a technical character where more than ordinary knowledge would appear to be necessary.

His employers were men of national reputation as technical experts, and ninety per cent of his customers were intimately familiar with details; and yet this man, with hardly a superficial knowledge of his goods save price, was able to close deals which seemed impossible to other salesmen thoroughly familiar with every part of the business.

This man was a selling genius, a wonder, a remarkable exception. What he did not know about his goods, he knew about something else. He could diagnose his customer and play him like a chessman on the chessboard. He knew men and things. He was well-read and posted upon about everything except the goods he sold.

Why did he allow himself to be ignorant of the goods he handled, when a little effort on his part would have been sufficient to have made him familiar with all that pertained to them? There can be no acceptable answer. His ignorance was self-inflicted and without excuse or reason. Perhaps he never tried to reason it out.

Notwithstanding that he earned or received $10,000 a year, he was a monumental failure, one of the greatest that I ever met. He did not do his best, because he was too lazy to fully equip himself for the battle of trade. He simply used what Nature had given him, did as he pleased, and succeeded marvelously well if you compare his results with those of ordinary others, but not half so well as his natural ability permitted. Had he learned his business, he would not have been a salesman on $10,000 a year; he would have owned the business.

I know of other men who handle enormous sales, and yet they know little about their goods. But all of these men, like the first, are failures, because every one is a failure, no matter what his salary or income may be, if he does not do his best.

The clerk in the grocery store, who learns all he can, who tries all the time, who is ever on the lookout for opportunity, is a much greater success, and deserves more credit, than does the man who draws $10,000 a year and yet is capable of earning $20,000.

Success is the product of one's best. Anything

below that is failure. Some men succeed in spite of ignorance, of laziness, and of indifference; that is to say, they appear to succeed, yet every one of them is a failure.

No man is a success who runs amuck with principles, who refuses to accept axiomatic rules and regulations, who is under the domination of his own arrogance.

One of the great fundamental principles of selling is the essentiality of knowing the goods you sell, and there can be no real or good salesmanship without it, and there are no exceptions, although occasionally we see what appears to be an exception.

If you have decided to become a salesman, and have reason to believe that you can sell goods, the first thing for you to do is to learn about your goods, to know them from the ground up, and, further, you should be familiar with similar goods whether carried by your house or by other houses.

This knowledge of your goods, even to the lower technical side of them, is necessary whether you be behind the counter, or on the road, or travel from house to house.

All the magnetism in the world, the supreme power of diagnosis and superlative selling ability, will not enable you to do your best without a knowledge of the goods you sell.

But let it be understood that knowledge of the goods without anything else is worth about as little

as would be a barrel of oxygen to the chemist who wanted to make air and found it impossible to obtain nitrogen.

There are men, dismal failures at selling, who have the most intimate knowledge of their goods. This knowledge, with something else, rounds out the perfect salesman. By itself, like any other one thing, it is worth practically nothing.

How far should this knowledge go? To the bottom, I should say, even to the very creation of things which go to make the goods you sell.

If you are selling cotton goods, for instance, it would be well for you to know how cotton is planted and how it grows, its condition when it leaves the field and how it is turned into cloth.

Perhaps this knowledge may not seem to appear to be valuable, and it is quite probable that you may never directly use it; but this intimate familiarity with every part of the goods, beginning with Nature's work, like all fundamental matter, will enable you to better present your wares to your customer.

Buyers are naturally question-askers. Salesmen are logically answerers of questions. You never know when a question will be asked, and nothing pleases the customer better than to feel that the salesman before him is thoroughly posted, not only in selling, but in the making of the goods from the raw material.

So much do I believe in this that I honestly feel that a saleswoman selling hosiery can make more and

better sales if she can trace a pair of stockings to the very ground which produced the raw material, although she may never impart that knowledge to anybody.

Your knowledge should extend into the use of the goods. What is any particular thing good for? What will it do? What will it not do? How long will it last? Why is it better for the customer to purchase it than anything similar?

You should learn to appraise values, to know qualities, to be able to explain why a certain brand is better than another, to make profitable comparisons.

It is not only necessary to know about the goods you sell, but you should be familiar with all similar goods sold by your house or by other houses, all substitutes and things which may be substituted for them. You should be a storehouse of technical information for the customer to draw upon as he may elect.

I would not advise you to throw this information at your customer, to force it into him, to talk scientifically and technically on every occasion; but you should have it on tap, ready for immediate delivery, and you should carry it even though you may never directly use it in your selling.

Educators and others differ materially, but all of them consider that certain academic fundamentals are essential to the building up of general education, even though some of the so-called fundamentals may not be used directly; but they are considered necessary for the foundation of the education to come, and

without them the education that we are using from day to day would totter and fall.

These same principles apply to an intimate technical knowledge of the goods you sell, even though you may seldom impart the information. But if you have this knowledge, you are better able to distribute the other information which is generally wanted and which could not exist without the inner knowledge upon which it rests.

Upon general principles, the more you know about your goods, the more you know about how they are made and sold, even to climatic conditions, the more and better sales you can make.

But there is such a thing as over-doing it, of keeping too close to the bottom, of spending too much time upon the techniques, and becoming too letter-perfect. It is not necessary for you to know as much about the manufacture of the goods as does the superintendent of the factory, and you need not be as skilled in details as are the workmen at the bench or before the loom. A close familiarity with them, covering all generalities and a general knowledge of the details, is likely to be sufficient. It should be considered a necessary part of salesmanship, and you should not feel yourself fully equipped without it.

How can you obtain this knowledge? In many ways.

Practically every industry has its literature. Your employer has, or should have, a business library. If he has not, buy the books or get them from some library.

The trade-paper gives much information. Read it regularly. And if there is more than one trade-paper devoted to your line, read them all, the poor ones and the good ones, for the poorest paper may contain valuable clippings.

Interview your fellow-salesmen. Play a regular game of profitable conversation. Go to the heads of your department and of other similar departments. Become friendly with the superintendent or foreman of the factory. All of these men are glad to impart information. Nothing pleases a well-posted man better than to tell what he knows to the fellow who wants to know it.

Visit every part of the factory, if your concern maintains one. See everything made, and begin with the raw material. If you are working for a jobber or retail house, get a letter of introduction to the superintendent of a factory. He will gladly accommodate you, and think all the more of you for asking the privilege. Probably you will learn more at the factory than at any other place, so far as the quality of the goods is concerned, but do not stop with the factory.

Although things are very much alike, and there are few exclusive articles, everything has some specific character; and it is necessary for you to be able to locate this advantage or peculiarity and to talk understandingly about it.

Your business reading should not be confined to

the goods you sell, but should cover all similar products and business in general.

Next to the factory, the best information is likely to come from contact with other salesmen. Here you may learn by observation and questioning the methods of handling goods, not only those used by your firm, but those of others, and you should analyze the difference. Each salesman will have a new-to-you message of information.

A familiarity with transportation facilities will not come amiss.

A thorough knowledge of what you sell is a fundamental part of salesmanship, an asset which continuously comes into play and without which the fullness of result is impossible.

KNOWING SOMETHING BESIDES YOUR GOODS

THERE are recorded cases of men of marked and extraordinary achievement, who have succeeded in making money and in successfully managing vast enterprises, without being familiar with much of anything except with the goods which directly pertained to their specific business.

I have one man in mind, who was almost completely ignorant of everything outside the place of his work, and who could hardly read and write; yet he accumulated millions of dollars and obtained an international reputation as a money-getter.

I have met, and am more or less acquainted with, quite a number of men, all of them money-makers, all of them business successes, and yet they know little of the world at large, practically all of their knowledge being limited to the things which are directly a part of their business. Their houses are places to sleep in, and their magnificent dining-rooms to them are no better than quick-lunch counters. They do not even know how to sleep or eat properly. They care for neither literature nor art, nor even for pleasure. Dissipation does not attract them, not because of their moral character, but because they have not the time to spare for it.

These men are exceptions, and they have succeeded in spite of their ignorance. But none of them would think of attributing any of their achievements to their ignorance and lack of interest in things outside of their business.

On the other hand, many men give too much time to outside or general matters, to the sacrifice of business.

We cannot serve two masters, either in business or out of it. We cannot do two things equally well. We must have a principal interest, and to that we must devote the major part of our working time.

It is obvious that the astronomer would never have discovered a star if he had not given the bulk of his time to star-gazing; and it is as true that the salesman must devote more hours to his business than to things outside of it if he would succeed in selling goods.

This is an age of specialties and of specialists. Unless we know one thing better than all else, we shall never make more than mediocre success. Yet the value of our specific knowledge is dependent upon a reasonable amount of general information, which allows us to better accumulate and distribute specific knowledge.

A knowledge of things in general, a familiarity with affairs outside of one's specific work, not only enables its possessor to do better work and accomplish more in a business way, but it makes him a better man and a better citizen. Without a knowledge of some-

thing besides what pertains to his business, he would be a mere automatic worker and a social dummy.

The salesman, particularly, should be a storehouse of general information, that he may impart it to the customer who wants it or asks for it. Unless he be posted upon things in general, has a reasonable knowledge of the rudiments of the arts and sciences, of politics and of literature, and particularly of men and things, he will betray his ignorance to his own detriment, and will not be able to meet his customer except upon a merely trading basis.

I do not mean to say that the salesman should be a connoisseur of art, or of science, or of literature, — a walking cyclopedia of one thing or an encyclopedia of everything. He has not the time, and, if he had it, it would not be necessary for him to be a conversational expert and a general distributer of learning. But unless he can talk understandingly upon general subjects, and especially upon those which bear some relation to his business, he is at a great disadvantage.

The traveling salesmen meets active men of money, who have automobiles and motor-boats, horses and other hobbies. If he knows about the things his customers are interested in, he will be a hail-fellow well met, and can get much closer to them than would be possible if he were familiar only with his business.

The retail salesman meets people of every class, and, although he does not have the same opportunity for conversation and discussion as that presented to

his brother on the road, a general knowledge of general things is likely to come into play every day and several times a day.

One should certainly know something about the weather and how to intelligently prognosticate to-morrow's conditions. If the customer in front of the counter says: "I hope it will not rain to-morrow," and she probably has good reasons for her preference, she will think more of the salesman who gives her a reason why he thinks it will or will not rain, than of the one who says he does not know or says nothing. Even this little thing, the weather, is worth studying, and so is every other thing which becomes a part of the daily life of the customer, that the salesman may be able to reply intelligently, at least, and to answer any reasonable question with some degree of accuracy.

How can you find out about things outside of your business? Read all you can get hold of, and have the time for, about things of general interest. Enter into conversation with intelligent people of experience. Make it a point, when you talk with anybody, to introduce a subject which he is more familiar with than you are. Every one likes to talk about his hobby or to show his knowledge. Encourage him. It will do him good and do you good. It is a mutual exchange of satisfaction.

Become a persistent and consistent reader of books and periodicals containing general information, and, especially, those carrying matter which constantly

comes into your sphere of business and life. A little reading, even thirty minutes a day of it, if well selected, will cover a vast amount of ground. But above all play the game of intelligent conversation, always bringing up some subject of general interest, and make special effort to converse with well-posted and up-to-date men and women.

Attend lectures and talks. Join some organization outside of the business club. Information is in the air, and all you have to do is to collect it. It is free for the asking.

The reader is referred especially to the chapters, "What to Read" and "What to Do Outside of Business."

DIAGNOSING THE CUSTOMER

Salesmanship is a battle on the field of business strife, the seller on the one side and the buyer on the other. Yet it may be a friendly fight, and there need be no bitterness in it; for, in the consummation of a good sale, both parties win. But it is a contest, nevertheless.

The proficient general never enters a battle, or orders his troops upon the field, without attempting to size-up the strength and character of the opposer. It is almost as necessary that he should know the power and character of the other side as it is to be familiar with his own forces and conditions.

The difference between an ordinary practicing physician and the specialist is largely in the power of diagnosis possessed by the latter. Every regular practitioner, the graduate of a medical school, is familiar with the science and practice of medicine; and almost any educated doctor, whether he be an expert or not, can effect a cure of a curable disease, if he knows what the matter is with the patient. But many a physician does not know when and where to use the treatments and medicines with which he is familiar. What would cure one may make another worse.

The so-called specialist or expert may not know any more about medicine than does the experienced family doctor, and may not, perhaps, be as familiar with general medicine as is the ordinary family physician, but he possesses the power of diagnosis. In most cases he can determine what the ailment or trouble is. Unprofessionally speaking, he sizes-up the patient, finds out what the matter is with him, and when he has reached this point, he is reasonably sure of curing him, if the disease be curable.

The successful salesman, like any other specialist, owes his more than ordinary success, not altogether to his knowledge of the goods and his ability to describe and present them, but, to a very considerable extent, to his ability to diagnose the buyer, to know the buyer, — his desires, his necessities, and his characteristics, including his hobbies, if he has any.

I think it is nearly as essential to know how to know the buyer as it is to know and describe the goods. At any rate, no one has succeeded in climbing beyond the second round of the ladder of salesmanship who has not possessed the ability to size-up and to diagnose the customer with some degree of accuracy.

Unless the salesman understands the buyer he is at a great disadvantage. Of course, he can obtain in many cases advance information about the man he expects to meet, and be prepared, therefore, to see him; but this advance information, coming from others, does not and cannot take the place of the

ability to personally size-up the customer and the situation, and to do it instantaneously if necessary.

Every one, buyers not excepted, has a personality, more or less hobbies and eccentricities. The ability to obtain a knowledge of them, either by inquiry or by intuition, gives the salesman an immense advantage.

Some sales-managers consider the power of diagnosis to be more poignant than any other factor in salesmanship, but I will not discuss its relative importance. So long as it is necessary to good salesmanship, and expert salesmanship is impossible without it, it may be considered at the head or at the foot, as you choose to place it.

Understanding or diagnosing the customer is that ability to feel as the customer feels, to get inside of the customer, so to speak, to see both sides at the same time, your side and his side. This cannot very well be taught, but a few suggestions may be of assistance.

Become a student of human nature. If this art does not come naturally to you, cultivate it to the best of your ability. Cultivation will make even barren soil somewhat fertile. Study every one who approaches you, whether he be a customer or not. Attempt to see every side of life and to be in sympathy with those you come in contact with, especially with those who are different from you. Discuss likes and dislikes with others, and human nature in general.

Consider every one you see as a type, and attempt to understand his characteristics. You will soon learn

that different people require different treatments, different methods of approach, different forms of arguments, that some will take kindly to strenuous methods, that others require positiveness or like hammer-blow arguments, while others have to be handled carefully and with the exercise of the greatest discretion.

Become acquainted with people, — the more the better. Experiment with them. Approach them in different ways. Talk to them along different lines. Do not have one form of argument, or one method of selling goods, at a sacrifice of all others. Do not be stagy. Be elastic and pliable. Of course, you should not outrage the general principles of salesmanship, but the same principles may be applied in different ways.

Especially associate with salesmen, traveling salesmen, and counter-men. Get hold of their ideas and study their methods, and consider every one you come in contact with as a customer, adapting yourself and your conversation to him. See what pleases him and what does not. Learn by experience what is acceptable to him and what is antagonistical. This you can do whether you are behind the counter or on the road, for in both places you meet representatives of every class.

Especially study faces. Learn to recognize at first sight, if you can, the nervous customer from the passive. Some folks enjoy a lot of talk and pleasantries, while others are matter-of-fact and will not tolerate other than straight talk.

You will not always strike it right, any more than

other specialists do, but a careful study of conditions should enable you to be more often right than wrong. You will discover that there are certain methods which are acceptable to practically every customer, and that there are others which must be used less frequently.

Avoid all unusual methods, or any display of the erratic or over-original, unless you are absolutely sure that they will appeal to your customer. Do not break over conventional forms unless you are reasonably certain that the customer will appreciate your originality and display of brilliancy. Keep in the beaten track until you are able to spread out. There is safety and some success in the middle of the road, although more than ordinary achievement is dependent upon being able to travel all over the road without losing your way.

In every town there are good salesmen, far more successful than the average. They possess something which contributes to their success and which the rank and file do not have. Get in contact with them and study them closely. Ask their advice, and remember that some people can do a thing which you cannot do, because they have greater personality, more force, and more ability. Therefore, it is not always safe to copy another's method unless you have his ability and resemble him generally.

Of course, you will be always under the risk of chance, for there is no sure method or any form or rule that is sure to win. But the more you study business and the conditions which surround it, the more you get into

close relations with them, the easier it will be for you to know men and things, and there will be a greater likelihood of meeting with success.

If you have any ability at all and are persistent, you will sooner or later learn how to somewhat diagnose the customer, particularly if you allow your failures to lead you to success. If you size-up a customer wrong and fail to make a sale, you have learned a valuable lesson, perhaps of more importance to you than if you had succeeded.

Remember that you must cater to the customer as you cannot compel him to bend to you. This being the case, there has been established a great law of salesmanship, which compels you, as the salesman, to learn to understand the customer, to anticipate his wants, that he may always welcome you, be glad to see you and to talk with you, whether or not he buys of you.

THE INSIDE SALESMAN

EXACT figures are impossible, but I think I may venture the statement that there are six times more men and women selling goods from behind the counter or inside the store than there are of those who travel on the road.

The inside salesman works exclusively indoors, and waits upon the customers who call at the store or place of business, and he does not go outside for trade. He takes what comes to him for the most part, although he can solicit on the outside by inviting people to come to him.

The fact that a proportion of inside sellers act as though they were waiters and not sellers of goods, and are, or appear to be, indifferent to building up a clientele of their own, and seem to be uninterested in their goods or their business, must not be taken as a reflection exclusively directed to inside sales-people, for this condition exists among salesmen on the road, although the traveling man, as he runs, is usually more aggressive and shows greater enterprise.

We are all children of circumstances and influenced by environment. Only a part of us do what we do not have to do, and the majority of sellers of goods, as of all other people, possess ordinary ability, and their

movements are often confined within the circle of conventionality.

Because the traveling man — the outside salesman — meets obstacles at every turn, and is obliged to take the initiative for the most part, he is, from force of circumstances, more aggressive, as a rule. If he were otherwise, he could not sell goods to any advantage. Environment and persistent conditions force him to exert himself. If he does not, he fails.

While, on the other hand, the inside man, whether or not he possesses a higher or a lower grade of ability, finds that he may make his living by waiting on people and by not always taking the initiative. Because he may do this, he is not forced, as the outside man is, to exert himself at all times.

Then, the inside man is directly under the discipline and orders of his superiors, and is quite apt to follow directions more or less blindly; while his outside brother, usually away from headquarters, must do a lot of self-thinking, and order and control himself to an extent which is not so necessary for the man directly in contact with his employer. This condition, much more than the individual ability or inability of the salesman, is largely responsible for the indifference shown by many inside sellers of goods.

I do not propose to compare the innate ability or the real character and ambition of either with the other. There are bright men and nonentities on both sides, men both of enterprise and of progressiveness and rep-

resentatives of the "don't-care" and "won't-work" classes. If there is less activity on the one side than on the other, it is because of conditions, largely imaginary ones.

Some inside sellers think that they do not have the same incentive or opportunity as that given to their outside colleagues. Assuming, for the sake of argument, that this be so, in some cases it does not furnish any good reason why the inside man should refuse to practice the initiative.

There is opportunity behind the counter and outside of the store. Opportunity is in the very air we breathe. It is everywhere, even in the poorest and most miserably conducted place of business where the employee may seem to be but a part of an automatically run business-getting machine.

But remember that opportunity never carries a torch. It travels by by-ways and along the side streets. It does not parade in the middle of the road. It makes no noise. No herald sounds its approach. It passes along in the quiet of the starless night. It makes little effort to meet anybody. It seldom extends its hand. It minds its own business. But it is ever ready to grasp the hand held out to it and to be a permanent guest in the house of progress.

I have heard of opportunity-less stores, where the sun of chance never shines. But I have never seen one, and I have never found any one who was willing to make affidavit that he had seen one. Even the store

of perpetual grind cannot help grinding out some opportunity.

Let the inside man particularly bear in mind that no work counts to anybody's credit, if it is done wholly because it has to be done. The work of success-making is that which is done voluntarily and not spurred to activity under the whip of business or necessity.

Men of more than ordinary success take the initiative, do their level best, because they want to, not because they have to. They do their duty, never shrink, and, what is more, they do more than their plain duty. Doing what we are told to do, and only that, accomplishes the minimum of result.

The inside salesman has one advantage over the traveling man in that he has less competition, and, further, because his customers come to him for the most part, and some of them will approach him if he makes no effort to attract their attention. This condition, unfortunately for the lazy and the indifferent, tends to breed inactivity, but it gives the progressive salesman a splendid opportunity to shine in decided contrast.

Because it is possible to make a living inside the store without being progressive, the man of action has all the more chance to show and to use what is in him. As a matter of fact, it takes a higher grade of character to be successful inside the store than it does to succeed on the road, because work done which does not have to be done always springs from the highest motives.

Because trade comes to the store, does not furnish any good reason why the inside man cannot use the progressiveness and tactics of the road. He has a fine opportunity to learn business, because he is close to the heart of it. He may become the head of a department, or even reach the position of superintendent, or gain an interest or a partnership.

If he would exert himself, as does the man on the road, the chances are that he would not remain behind the counter indefinitely, but would eventually become a manager of a part of the business.

He has his choice of sleeping or of working, of doing his best or of merely making a living.

He has another advantage, and that is that he can retain his position if he does fairly good work and attends to business. The store, by its advertising and enterprise, has furnished him with material to work upon. With half of the selling ability and effort made by the man on the road he can earn his living. And this, instead of keeping him back, should spur him on to greater effort.

Every salesman is watched. If he lags or loafs, no one takes any interest in him. He will simply be tolerated. If he shows enterprise, he is encouraged and recognized, perhaps not every time, but his proficiency is sure to pay in the end.

The dead-centers behind the counter exist because of lack of energy and of an unwillingness to do more than ordinary duty.

The inside man should learn his business, know all about the goods he sells, how they are made and where they come from, and he should be somewhat familiar with the goods outside of his department.

Further, he should learn business, — its principles, its ethics, and its actions. He should not be unfamiliar with the methods of other stores and with similar goods carried by them.

It would pay him to learn his goods from the ground up, to know how the material is grown or obtained, how it is manufactured, and what it is good for and is not good for.

He should read about his goods in books and in trade papers, that he may be known as the best-posted man in his department. This information will help him in many ways, not only with his employer, but with the customer, for the customer is looking for advice and takes kindly to expert suggestion.

He has an unusual opportunity to study human nature, for he meets all kinds of people. He sees them when they are happy and when they are sad. He can help them or hinder them.

One reason why many inside salesmen do not succeed is because they are perpetual fault-finders, kickers, and knockers. They look upon the dark, not the bright, side of their positions. They seem to think that they have no opportunity and that the man over them has no interest in them. They forget that the business man is in business for profit, that the salesman is a

part of his business army, that without him he cannot do business, and that, if he be a man of any business capacity, he cannot help recognizing faithful and progressive service.

It is idle to talk about favoritism and about being kept down, although this condition may occasionally exist. Business is business, and business plays no favorites, except with men who are deficient in business acumen.

The salesman may be an automatic seller, a sort of human slot-machine, if he will; or he can be a thinking, acting, doing man, if he prefers. If he thinks, studies, and throws the best of himself into his work, even the meanest employer is likely to promote him from selfish motives.

It is pretty difficult to keep a good man down, as good men run, although promotion does not seem to be always equitably distributed. While many of us do not get what we deserve, we are pretty sure not to receive what we do not deserve; and few so-called favorites stay there, if they get there, unless they are worthy of getting there.

The average inside salesman does not respect himself as he should. He does not realize that he is a working part of the great business machine, and not an insignificant cog in a brainless wheel.

Activity counts behind the counter and everywhere else.

If you are inside the store, help to make your depart-

ment the most attractive one there. If you do not have the goods, you have yourself. Do not be a mere seller, but a demonstrator and an exhibiter.

If you are not a fluent talker, learn to talk. You can improve in this direction, if you will. You can learn about your goods, and when you do, you will find that it is pretty easy to talk about things you know about.

If you are always on the alert, are well-posted, and interest fairly radiates from your face, some of your customers will speak well of you, and the superintendent is sure to notice you.

You cannot always satisfy the customer with the goods you sell, but you can, if you will, usually satisfy him with yourself. You are not responsible if the goods do not suit, but you are usually responsible if you do not suit. There may be something the matter with the goods, but do not let there be anything the matter with you.

Remember that you are between two factors or extremes, your employer who is anxious to have you sell goods, and your customer who usually can get along without him, you, or the goods, for he can buy elsewhere. To succeed you must stand between the two for the benefit of both.

Politeness behind the counter is indispensable. The more of it the better, and there is very little danger of your over-doing it. Treat your customer as you would a guest in your house. Radiate good-will and cordiality.

Be known as the customer's friend, the man it pays to trade with.

Do not look for promotion all the time or worry too much about recognition. If you do not get it, perhaps a part of the fault is yours; but you are pretty sure to get there if you deserve to, sooner or later.

There are a few concerns who do not give opportunity to their employees, who buy them on the market and treat them like cattle; but these concerns are few and far between, because it does not pay to be brutal or unfair. If you happen to be connected with one of these, get out; but be mighty sure of your ground before you make the move. Perhaps you imagine faults which do not exist.

Remember that the fellow who does not succeed in a small job never makes good in a big job. Doers of big things are always doers of small things.

No matter where you are, do your best for your own sake, even under the greatest handicaps.

If the man you work for represents the very superlative of meanness and unfairness, do not let that interfere with your own actions. You are primarily working for yourself, and you cannot throw all the responsibility upon your employer. Constant dissatisfaction and blaming the other fellow are responsible for many failures. Do not allow yourself to fool yourself.

Everywhere there is drudgery, and the blame is not located on either side exclusively. It is hard work behind the counter and everywhere else. Disappoint-

ments are of hourly occurrence. You must meet these obstacles or go out of business. Take an interest in your business or give it up.

Perhaps you are one of the great exceptions, and are working in a bargain basement, with a brutal man over you, and a hustling, jostling, cruel mob of customers after you. You are naturally tired, worried, discouraged, and, perhaps, sick. Your lot is a hard one, — a mighty hard one, — but lack of interest will not help you. Nothing in the world makes a hard job easier than to become interested even in the worst side of it.

When you are working for yourself, are faithful to your position, are doing your best even when on the rack of a bargain sale, the annoyances are not half so bad; and when you go home, tired though you may be, you have that restful, delightful satisfaction of feeling that you are true to yourself and true to your duty; and you will be ten times happier than you would be if you met unfairness with unfaithfulness and annoyances with lack of interest.

It is not the person you work for that counts the most. It is your work, and your work is you.

Above all, respect yourself and your position as much as you can, for it is you, not your employer, that you are working for, and you cannot be faithful to him, or faithful to yourself, or true to the better things of life, unless you enter your work, menial though it may be, with a respect for yourself and for the work you

do, always striving to do your best and with interest always alert, for these things, and these things alone, will give you peace of mind, reasonable happiness, and place you on the road to promotion.

You cannot, even under the most distressing circumstances, be wholly removed from opportunity, from a chance to better yourself. But this opportunity never comes to those not seeking for it. Promotion never reaches the idler behind the counter.

If you do your best, respecting yourself while you do it, you may, and probably will, better yourself; but if you do not, you have absolutely no chance of any kind of promotion.

If you have turned the half-hundred year mark, and are still behind the counter on a small salary, do not brood over it; do not limit your fault-finding to the man you work for; do not make a specialty of dissatisfaction.

The man who cannot get something out of anything — even the farmer on the rocky farm, who cannot coax unfertile soil to yield some kind of a harvest — is never going to get the most out of the most fertile ground and succeed under the most favorable conditions.

Make the most of the job you have, until you get a better one. Never find fault with your employer, without first examining yourself, that you may determine which is the more to blame.

Get hold of yourself. Remember that you are working for yourself. Change your tactics, if you can.

Become so interested in your business that you will get satisfaction from what you do, no matter what it is. Look upon the bright side of things.

Do not worry about the mistakes you have made, but rather think about correcting them. It is never too late to learn, and never too late to receive promotion. Make everything count, from the small things to the big ones.

The fault-finder is usually at fault.

The ship never came in to the loafer on the dock.

THE TRAVELING SALESMAN

Practically all wholesale houses, jobbers, and distributers of every class of merchandise and of everything of every kind for sale, and manufacturers of everything which is sold, employ men and women, usually the former, to meet their trade and to sell goods outside of the place of business. These sellers are known as drummers, traveling salesmen, or traveling saleswomen.

Although practically every seller of goods to the trade employs inside salesmen, from seventy-five to ninety per cent of all sales, barring those of a few exceptional houses, are consummated outside of the place of business and through the intervention of the traveling men, who sell either by sample or by description, and most of them carry samples.

Theoretically the traveling salesman is not a business necessity, for it would seem to be obvious that the retail store-keeper, and other purchaser in trade, is, or should be, a trained buyer, who knows what he wants and when he wants it, and that he would purchase anyway, either by mail or by visiting the manufacturer or wholesaler.

But practically the reverse is true, comparatively few goods being sold by the impersonal introduction of samples and catalogues. Conditions rightly or wrongly require the presence of the traveling salesman and a

superabundance of personal solicitation. While this condition exists, and no change is in sight, the traveling man will continue to be a business-getting necessity.

The man on the road occupies a position of considerable importance. While the reputation of the house he represents, and the quality of the goods, go with him, his personality and ability come mightily into play, partly because he is representing his firm outside of its place of business, and, in most cases, he is the only one who comes in contact with the buyer.

It is obviously more difficult to sell goods away from the store or factory than it is on the premises. When trade comes to you, as it does if you are in a retail store or behind the counter, the customer to some extent takes the initiative. At any rate, his presence indicates that he is in a buying mood and is more likely to order something than not to at all. Under these conditions, a certain amount of trade will result irrespective of the ability of the salesman to handle the customer.

On the road it is different. The salesman must take the initiative. He cannot always know that his customer wants to buy or can be made to buy. True, he may, in some cases, make an appointment in advance of calling, but even then he is on the initiative side, and it requires more effort to take the initiative than it does to handle what comes to you.

The fact that one salesman can do a large business in a given territory, and that another connected with

the same concern cannot profitably handle it, the buying conditions remaining the same, is proof positive that the ability of the salesman to meet conditions, including opposition and competition, is a large factor in the consummation of trade.

But it is true, nevertheless, that a proportion, if not a large one, of failure to make good on the road occurs because the salesman does not use more than a small amount of his natural ability. He is indifferent or lazy. He does not post himself about his goods. He does not try to familiarize himself with the characteristics of his customer or with local conditions.

He approaches the customer hit or miss, tells his conventional story, and sometimes succeeds when he deserves to fail. He does not seem to care so long as he makes a few sales, yet he may have more than ordinary ability. Probably laziness, pure and simple, is the root of much of the trouble.

Trying, and trying hard, will lift many a man on to a plane higher than he supposed he could occupy when he started in to make the most of his ambition.

There are, of course, many men who cannot sell goods on the road. If they attempt to do so, they fail, and often miserably fail.

Selling ability, especially the quality which makes good on the road, cannot be created. If one has positive evidence that he cannot sell goods with any degree of success, he certainly should not make the attempt. If he is already on the road, and fails, no matter how

much effort he makes, and cannot seem to meet conditions after many and persistent trials, he had better consider some other vocation.

Nor would I advise one to become a traveling salesman who thoroughly dislikes selling or is not self-possessed. Some folks are born scared, and try as they do, they are too easily disconcerted to meet the vicissitudes which daily occur on the road.

The majority of great merchants have sold goods on the road, and most of them owe their present positions to their ability to sell under difficulties and to meet competition face to face.

But selling ability alone does not necessarily make a merchant.

Some good salesmen — men who are receiving high salaries — cannot command salesmen. They are able to sell goods themselves, but do not know how to direct others, nor do they seem to have general business ability. They remain salesmen, or if they do not, they fail.

The handling of business requires a different kind of ability than that necessary for salesmanship alone. Yet the ability to sell goods adds greatly to the making and success of the merchant; in fact, comparatively few men become great merchants unless a part of their experience includes the selling of goods. Proportionate figures are impossible, but I think that I may venture the statement that ninety per cent of our most successful merchants were at one time expert salesmen, and

that seventy-five per cent of that ninety per cent were able traveling salesmen.

An important part of business-doing is the direction of salesmen, and it is obvious that few men can successfully direct salesmen unless they are salesmen or have been. In the first place it is extremely difficult to obtain a knowledge of salesmanship without actual experience, and if one does not have it, he is not likely to command the respect of those under him.

Traveling salesmen are, as a rule, paid higher salaries than those received by inside salesmen. The majority of them receive a specific sum per week or month, and are allowed a reasonable amount for traveling expenses, which is supposed to cover everything except clothes and other personal items. The traveling salesman has, therefore, little board to pay. This is an advantage, if the man is without family, but does not count for so much to the married man with a family and home.

Some salesmen work entirely on commission, and pay their own traveling expenses; but the majority receive a specified salary and expenses.

Occasionally the salesman works upon both a salary and commission, or upon a guarantee.

It does not make much difference, because no salesman will hold his position if he does not make good, and a salary amounts to about the same as a commission, and a commission to about the same as a salary, except in exceptional cases.

Probably the best form is both a salary and a commission, or what is known as a drawing account against a commission, it being understood that the salesman may receive a specific amount whether or not his commissions meet it. This gives him a definite sum to rely upon so long as his sales are satisfactory. If they are not, he will lose his position eventually.

Life on the road is hard, except to the few who seem to enjoy it. Traveling is not easy, save for the tourist and pleasure seeker. The novelty soon wears off, and all hotels look alike and all food soon tastes the same. Traveling frequently means from one to six hotels a week, night journeys, indigestible food, long hours, and other annoyances, yet the man with the right stuff in him will make the best of these conditions, and they may not worry him if he attends to business.

So long as most of the sales are made on the road and the traveling salesman remains a necessity, the road will offer the best training for future success in the wholesale business, and the experience of traveling will continue to be necessary for the best rounding-out of profitable selling experience.

The traveling man has one advantage over the inside salesman. While the reputation of his house counts, his customers are to a greater extent his own, and he may have better opportunity to prove his worth to the concern he works for. This means promotion, and may lead to partnership.

I am not depreciating the advantages of inside sales-

manship, because the inside man has more opportunities than he is supposed to possess.

I have attempted to treat the other side, — the retail salesman's side, — in a chapter by itself, and to bring out the advantages and opportunities which accrue to him. The positions are different, yet great men have sprung from both of these departments of salesmanship. It is quite difficult to compare these two great classes, and the casual reader may feel that the two chapters are somewhat contradictory. Perhaps they are in spots, for it is next to impossible to be absolutely fair when one is handling a difference depending so much upon similar, yet dissimilar, conditions, and when so much is dependent upon personality, individuality, and capacity.

If one has much selling ability, and enjoys good health, I would advise him to consider selling on the road, provided he has reason to feel that he will not be obliged to remain there forever. Every man has a right to a family and to home life. This he cannot have more than nominally if he remains a traveling salesman. True, he can be married and have children; but if he is away most of the time, he cannot feel that he has a local habitation and a name, and he will be unhappy unless he is of Bohemian spirit, in which case he should not have a family at home or abroad.

In these days of severe competition and the centralization of capital, it is not easy to obtain a partnership or to become more than a subordinate official. There-

fore, the man on the road, if successful, may sometimes find it difficult to get away from it or to obtain so good a position at the home office.

The opportunities for partnership, and for residential positions, may not be as good as they used to be. The strenuosity of business, growing greater every day, requires that many of the best men remain on the firing line. But this condition should not deter one from going on the road, if he is ambitious, for he may have a much better opportunity of eventually obtaining a good residential position, if he goes there and makes good, than if he only realizes an indifferent success inside the store or office. I am referring here to wholesale houses and not to retail establishments.

Under present conditions the experiences of the traveling salesman seem to be essential to the training for success in the active side of the wholesale business, notwithstanding that not a few men have risen to the top who have never sold goods outside of the store. One of my best friends — a leader in his line — has never been on the road, and does not recall that he ever sold a bill of goods inside the store or out of it, yet he is a marvel at directing salesmen. He is an exception, that is all. But think of what he probably would have accomplished had he had selling experience!

It is a common belief among some people that the traveling salesman is simply a drummer and little more, that his experience and knowledge are limited

largely to the purely selling side of business, and that he cares for and practices little else. As a matter of fact, the first-class traveling salesman is a representative of broad business ethics, and is usually familiar with business in general, although he practices selling almost exclusively.

Unless he is a drone, in which case he is not likely to remain on the road, he has an exceptional opportunity to come in close contact with every phase of business life. Every day, and sometimes every hour, he meets different kinds of men. He is traveling from house to house, and from town to town, and he cannot avoid becoming familiar, not only with men, but with local conditions. He may not be book-learned, but he cannot help being world-learned.

I think there is more diversity of characteristics in traveling men than in any other class of business-doers; yes, or any other class of men not excepting those in the professions. To succeed they have to be alert and up-to-the-times, really up-to-the-minute.

Folks in general, and even some of the craft themselves, are laboring under the delusion that every traveling man, in method and in practice, is not unlike his fellows. While successful drummers practice good selling principles, comparatively few of them are exactly alike in method, each one having his own ideas and following them, provided they do not outrage accepted principles.

I have in mind four very proficient sellers of goods

on the road, and they illustrate the tremendous difference between traveling men.

The first is the personification of dignity, seldom utters more than a short sentence at a time, has little sense of humor, never attempts to crack a joke, and has hardly a perceptible smile for any witticism, light talk, or humorous story. He is not particularly prepossessing, and his personality is not striking; yet he was, perhaps, the best salesman of his class on the road, and possessed so much business ability that he was taken into the firm at an early age.

The second salesman I have in mind is one of the jolliest and wittiest fellows I have ever met. He wears a perpetual smile. He laughs and jokes with his customers, and has a round of stories which seems to cover the whole wit and humor of the world. When selling goods, he intersperses his arguments with witticisms, — always good and clean ones. Buyers look forward, as a rule, with pleasure to his coming. He sells goods, and I have heard it said that he sold more than any other in his line.

I recall the third salesman, who combines dignity with wit and good-fellowship. He is a great success.

The fourth example is a man who fairly radiates self-conceit, and is positively objectionable to his customers; yet by sheer persistency and a full knowledge of his product he has achieved remarkable success. Of course, he is an exception. If he were genial, he would do double the business.

In the ranks of traveling men are classical scholars, socialists, and men of deep learning; and these attainments do not seem to interfere with their work.

Perhaps one reason why these men succeed is because they are natural, they act themselves, they present what they have in their own way; but I would not advise any young salesman to copy their methods unless he is the same kind of a man, nor would I suggest that a naturally morose man carry his morbidness with him if he can get rid of it or cover it up. But I would say to all traveling men, that as they cannot successfully be anything but what they are, they had better be as they are, subject to proper regulation, getting rid, if possible, of the objectionable, and intensifying the good that is in them.

When you go on the road, go on with all your might. Make up your mind to win, to be so engrossed with your business that the annoyances of travel will count but little to you. You have a fight to make, and your future depends upon your victories.

Do not go on the road until you know about the house you work for, — its reputation, its position in the trade; — and, further, be familiar with the character of every house in your line. You must know, not only about the goods you carry, but of those sold by others. Learn about your goods from the ground up. Know how they compare with other similar goods, and be familiar with the policies of every house of your kind.

Do not fail to read your trade paper regularly. When you meet other salesmen, swap experiences with them. You are a member of a great traveling school of business, from which there is no graduation, for you study on forever.

Be so familiar with your goods that you can advise the customer. Be so genial and generous that he will be glad to see you. The chances are that you will carry nothing better than what others do, and that the prices will be about the same. Your success depends upon your personality, your ability to satisfy your customer, not only with the goods you sell, but with yourself.

On one side is the house you represent, on the other the one you sell to. Unless you are honest and friendly with both, and faithful to both, — unless every trade you make is of mutual advantage to you and to the buyer, — you are not a continuous success.

Respect yourself, and be proud of your firm. If you cannot be, get out. Feel that your position is second to none, or will lead to it; that you are the firm itself; and that everything you do reflects upon it as well as upon you.

It is your duty, not only to sell goods, but to aid the firm you work for with advice and suggestions. You meet the trade face to face, while the heads of your house see it by mail or through their salesmen. Keep your firm posted on selling conditions. Be a scout as well as a seller of goods. Feel that you are a

part of the firm, not a mere representative of it; that the firm's success depends as much upon you as your success depends upon it.

While away from your house, you are to the buyer the firm itself, the man most in evidence; and the more that you feel this responsibility, the more that you realize that you are working for yourself as well as for your firm, the more goods you will sell and the quicker you will rise from the ranks of the commanded into a commanding position.

While on the road, you will have some time to yourself, evenings for the most part, and during this off-time you will be by yourself or can be if you choose. Most certainly I would not advise a man to become a hermit on the road, to go to his room and stay there between his selling efforts. All of us need social intercourse and some amusement and entertainment. Contact with other salesmen is necessary for social enjoyment and is a profitable proposition. Without effort one can in conversation swap experiences of great selling value.

But do not spend all of your time talking or in any one form of amusement. Take up systematic reading, always along the line of your choice, provided it is elevating.

(See the chapters "What to Read" and "What to Do Outside of Business.")

Just a word to the home-folks and to parents in general: Some good people object to sending their

boys on the road because of the real or imaginary temptations which are said to surround every one away from home.

Undoubtedly there are temptations, and every salesman is subjected to them, but the fellow who has not strength enough to resist temptation away from home is not likely to keep straight at home. The weakling is sure to fail morally, anyway, and the slightest temptation throws him down.

Temptation was put into this world for a purpose, — to be overcome and mastered. The bad man on the road would probably have been a bad man at home. Temptation is not limited to traveling.

No one should refuse to go on the road because of the temptations which will surround him. If he has the right stuff in him, he will come out ahead. If he has not, he will go under, maybe quicker on the road than at home; but if one is going to be a moral wreck anyway, perhaps the quicker he goes to pieces the better.

Temptation is a stone in the pavement of the road to success. If it were not there, we should coast through life, and few of us would take the pains to learn to walk.

SATISFYING THE CUSTOMER

THERE are two factors accompanying every trade of every kind. On the one side is the seller, who is more anxious to sell than the buyer is to buy. At any rate, the salesman must assume this position. Naturally he wants to make the sale as profitable as possible for himself if he be the principal, and for his employer if he be the employee.

Probably in some cases he would ask more than a fair price, if he thought he could obtain it, although this would be bad policy in the end, for the unwritten law of custom, more or less affiliated with equity, right, and justice, does not permit a continuous outrage of its principles, and will not watch over and protect indefinitely the house which insists upon receiving a more than reasonable profit.

The truth of the foregoing statement may be questioned by those who are suffering under the present high cost of living and who believe that the prices asked are exorbitant.

My sympathy is with these people, because I am well aware that some trusts and combinations are demanding and receiving more than a fair profit. But the reaction is setting in, and it is only a question of time before civilization will reach a plane high

enough to control, or, at least, regulate, the cost or price of necessities. But the majority of articles sold are placed upon the market at a fair price, and do not pay the seller an exorbitant profit.

On the other side is the customer, who may or may not need the goods, and who can get, in most cases, the same thing, or something as good or similar, at the same price, of somebody else. He is not dependent, as a rule, upon any one store or firm or upon any one salesman. He is not, or does not appear to be, as anxious to buy as is the seller anxious to sell. He is, to an extent, an autocrat. He has a right, or exercises what he considers a right, to object to the price and to the quality. He makes as strenuous an effort to keep prices down as does the seller to keep prices up. He may be as unfair as the most unfair maker or seller of goods.

Here are two opposing forces, both likely to be unreasonable at times, and both willing to some extent to get the better of the other, neither always realizing that good business cannot exist except where the trade is a mutual exchange, of as much benefit to one as to the other.

Whether or not it is right or wrong to ask more than the goods are worth has not yet become a business ethic, and it will be some time before all business will be conducted along purely ethical lines and controlled by moral as well as by legal laws. For awhile some sellers will attempt to get all they can, and an

equal number of buyers will make as great an effort to purchase below a fair price. The principal difference is that the seller wants to receive more than his goods are worth, and the buyer wants to get more than his money's worth. The salesman is between these two factors, each more or less unreasonable, each sometimes demanding more than its due, and the salesman must satisfy both or go out of business. In justice to his employer he must obtain the price decided upon, and convince the buyer that it is right. He must take the quality, character, and price of the goods given him and make the sale, usually against competition, both fair and unfair. He must follow the policy of the house he works for or sever his connection with it.

On the other hand, continuous success is impossible if he does not consider the customer, for it is just as important to please one as the other, as sales cannot continue to be made unless both sides are satisfied.

Any misrepresentation, which is to the disadvantage of the customer, will sooner or later react on the salesman and the house he works for. Regular customers are not fools. Unless they are usually satisfied, they will discontinue doing business with the salesman and his house.

The salesman must not only satisfy the customer in the quality of the goods and the price, but he must be satisfactory as a salesman; in fact, this personal equation is of the utmost importance, particularly

when selling goods in open competition where the only difference appears to be in the personality of the salesman.

The customer should be glad to see the salesman, and like to do business with him, otherwise some other house may get the business.

The policy of the selling house may not appeal favorably to the buyer. It then becomes necessary for the salesman to reconcile the buyer to that policy, and to do this he must bring into play all of his personality and the good-will of his character. He cannot change the policy, but he must be able to change the customer's opinion, or to so ingratiate himself with the customer that he will not rebel against what he would not put up with if he did not like the salesman.

The successful salesman studies the likes and dislikes, the characteristics and eccentricities, of his customer, that he may not antagonize him, and that he may the better satisfy him. Unless he can make his customer glad to see him, inspire confidence in him, and, in the long run, be of actual benefit to him, either in a business or a personal way, or in both, he will do little selling.

The fact that from fifty to eighty-five per cent of all goods are sold through the intervention of the salesman, coupled with the fact that most everything is in duplicate, including prices, indicates that there is something besides quality of goods and price necessary for the consummation of trade.

This something is vested in the salesman, — the ability to give something besides the goods and the price. He must create a business friendship, if one of no other kind, and this is where his personality comes in, his general knowledge of men and things, his geniality, his courtesy, and his ability to size-up the customer.

If he is continually thinking of the policy of his business, and of exclusive faithfulness to his employer, to the detriment of his customer's interest, he will fail. And he will make as great mistake if he forgets his employer's interest for the benefit of the customer.

To succeed, he must represent both sides, his employer's first and to the greater extent; but he must not be forgetful of his customer's rights and interests. He is an agent of both, — a profitable go-between.

The shrewd and designing salesman may work off undesirable goods, may over-load the customer to his loss and to the transient benefit of the seller. This may give present profit, but is suicidal in the end. It does not build up permanent business. It never pays to over-load a customer, — to make him buy what he cannot dispose of or use.

The over-loaded customer is dissatisfied with himself, with the man who sold him the goods, and with the goods themselves; and, if these goods have been forced upon him, he is rightly prejudiced against the salesman and the house he represents.

Some salesmen even go so far as to under-sell rather than over-sell. They think that the customer will be better satisfied if he has to reorder than if he has a few of the goods left over.

Many a salesman has advised the buyer to cut down the size of his order, where there is sure to be a sufficient quantity of the goods on hand for immediate delivery when wanted. I know of one very successful concern, which has built up the second largest business of its kind in the country on the policy of advising the customer to buy what he wants when he wants it, and is continuously cautioning him against over-stocking. This house invariably satisfies the customer. It will not sell a line of goods, except under compulsion, if it feels that the buyer cannot use them to advantage.

The best salesmen — the salesmen who have achieved fame on the road or behind the counter — are those who never sell a customer what they believe will not be to his advantage; and they never force more goods upon him than they believe he can easily dispose of or use. By always feeling and showing a genuine interest, the customer becomes a friend as well as a customer, and the salesman has a personal influence over him, which he has fairly earned. He satisfies the customer in quality of the goods, in price, in the salability of the goods, and in his own personality. He does not ask him to buy what he would not buy of the customer if they exchanged places.

The salesman who cannot see the customer's side, and who is unable to work in the mutual interest of the buyer and seller, is not a real salesman and cannot expect to succeed.

The salesman is the solicitor — he takes the initiative. It is, therefore, his duty to satisfy the customer.

It is obvious that the thoroughly successful buyer will treat the salesman with the same courtesy and consideration that he expects the salesman to give him. But the buyer may, to some extent, do as he pleases, and yet succeed; while the salesman, to succeed, must satisfy the customer, whether or not the customer is satisfactory to him, and he must cater to that customer, help him and guide him, and subordinate himself to him up to the point of not losing his self-respect.

The dissatisfied customer does not remain a customer.

APPROACHING THE CUSTOMER

THE intrinsic value of proper presentation or approach cannot be over-estimated.

A prominent real estate agent once said to me:

"If you want to sell a house to advantage, have the approach attractive, and the front hall especially so. This condition, properly met, gives the best initiative impression."

Theatrical managers, especially, appreciate this, for theaters have most attractive entrances and their lobbies are well furnished and inviting.

First impressions are of major importance. They produce a feeling of good-will and cordiality and engender a willingness to go further, to make inquiries or an examination.

The buyer, who is met by the road salesman, may be busy or irritable and have a tendency to turn everybody down. If the first impression or the approach is pleasing and does not antagonize him, the salesman is given an opportunity to present his goods.

The same condition applies to the man behind the counter. The customer selects, if he can do so conveniently, the salesman who impresses him the most. He may judge superficially, and first impressions are not

always based upon reason; but they are inevitable and are going to count in practically every case.

It is difficult to always make a good impression, or to approach the customer to his satisfaction, for no one can diagnose every one correctly, and cannot know just how to act at the start every time; but if his manner is pleasing a part of the battle is won.

The languid, "don't-care" look behind the counter has spoiled many a trade and has driven many a customer to another salesman or to another store.

The salesman should always wear an interested and pleasing look, and should show his willingness to sell and to assist the customer. This look and manner must be cultivated, if it is not natural; and, if natural, developed.

The first word, or the first few words, with the right facial expression accompanying them, may be responsible for the sale. The appearance of cordiality attracts the customer and puts him in the right frame of mind, giving the salesman opportunity to do his best and to accomplish the most.

Perhaps you have some mannerism, which is obnoxious to most people, and if you have it, very likely you do not know that you have it. Nothing irritates more than some mannerisms do. If you know that you have one, get rid of it. If you do not know, inquire. This point should especially interest the traveling salesman, for he, more than the counter-man, gets close to his customer.

Be alert. Show your interest in your face and manner. Let the customer know that you want his trade, not by appearing over-anxious for it, but by being thoroughly interested and ready to meet him more than halfway.

The appearance of too much cordiality or too much persistency may be injurious, but better have too much of either or both than too little of them. Better be over-cordial than indifferent, and over-persistent than the opposite.

Your whole personal appearance counts, from your necktie to your shoes. Your voice and manner are parts of salesmanship.

If you are behind the counter and have no customer, be on the lookout for one. Meet him with your eyes and your whole manner, and when he approaches you, be so cordial and so interested that you cannot help making a good impression.

Do not hand things out, show them. Do not turn your face away from the customer. Keep face to face with him as much as you can. Cultivate the smile that stays on; but do not grin or be supercilious, and never patronizing.

Be independent and self-respecting, but do not forget the customer is your superior for the time being.

If you do not know how to properly make a first impression, watch others; watch them, anyway. See how successful salesmen do. If you are in a retail store and have any time off, get close to successful salesmen as

much as possible. Watch and study their facial expressions, their manners, their voices, and their methods.

The customer, especially the retail buyer, is a sort of will o' the wisp. He goes and he comes. It is often necessary to nail him with a glance and hold him with a word.

As the first impression comes first, it is of first importance. It is the gateway to success in selling. Many a man of little selling ability has done well because of his manner, his cordiality, and his fervent interest in the customer.

It may be hard work to look happy and to dispense cordiality when your liver is out of order and your customer is not a gentleman. It is not easy to sell goods anyway, and I know of no easy business anywhere. If you feel all right, show it on your face and in your manner. If you do not, then act as though everything was going smoothly with you. Your customer cares nothing about your troubles, and you have no right to burden him with them.

The control of yourself, and the ability to radiate cordiality and good-will, are things which must be cultivated and maintained, if one would succeed at selling. It is necessary for you to have yourself under such control that you can immediately bring the best of you into your face and manner, that you may make a good impression at the start.

But do not forget that a good first impression is

worth mighty little if it fades. Good first impressions must be followed by good second impressions.

First sales are of great importance, and often difficult to obtain, but their value is dependent largely upon their continuance. It is the same with impressions.

A good start is pretty likely to lead to a good finish.

FORCING A SALE

Force, or coercion, or undue or over-pressure, must never be exercised, if one would make a permanent customer, except when the customer is vacillating or appears to be unable to decide for himself. But, even then, the salesman should use great caution, and should not apply force or use strenuous methods, if they will be apparent to the customer.

The salesman who earns permanent success usually appears to be, and is, working in the interest of the customer as well as of the house he represents, and is impressing upon him the great selling fact that the principle of correct business-doing is based upon reciprocity, — a desire to produce a mutual benefit.

Where the customer is vacillating, does not seem to have a mind of his own, and shows weakness and indecision, the salesman may be justified in using force, provided the customer will stand for it, and provided the salesman knows how to properly use it and to so disguise it that to the customer it appears to be earnestness rather than force, and friendly advice rather than coercion.

Many young salesmen, anxious to make a sale, crowd the customer; and, although they may succeed

at times, they are not likely to leave a good impression, and this operates against them, perhaps for years to come.

Do not misunderstand me, and do not think that I am opposed to strenuous methods, or a display of earnestness, even if they approach vehemency, because they are often necessary. But I would emphatically advise the salesman against crowding or driving the customer, against forcing him to do what he is sure to be sorry for afterwards. A forced sale, or a sale against the interest of the customer, even though the method used may not antagonize him at the time, is sure to have boomerangic effect.

The salesman must not only make a good first impression, but he must so handle the customer, and so sell him, that the favorable impression given will remain. Unless the trade satisfies the customer after the goods are delivered, the hard work done by the salesman is likely to be lost so far as subsequent sales are concerned.

The refusal to crowd, force, or coerce, in no way interferes with persistency and positiveness, both of which are necessary to the consummation of most sales, for the customer expects the salesman to be both persistent and positive and has little respect for the salesman who is not. But no customer worth having will stand crowding or coercion more than once, and may refuse to see the salesman when he calls the second time.

These principles apply to retail selling as well as to selling on the road.

Even the supercilious, vacillating, namby-pamby, retail buyer likes to feel that the goods were not forced upon him.

Once in a while force may be necessary, but when it is used it should be so covered up that it will not be recognized by the customer.

Assisting the customer, suggesting to him, helping him to make up his mind, is not in any sense forcing the customer. Many a buyer, especially one before the counter, does not know what he wants, and no sale is possible unless the salesman helps him out by advice and suggestion. To do this does not require any form of coercion, for it should be given in a friendly, interested way, so put that the customer will be really thankful for it, and go away without any feeling that the goods have been forced upon him.

EMPLOYER AND EMPLOYEE

The doing of all business, and the management and action of all commercial affairs, from making the goods to the selling of them, require the services of two classes of workers, — the employer who during working hours is in command of the employee, and the employee who during the same time is under the direction of the employer.

This condition will exist as long as there is necessity for business accomplishment. Somebody must direct, and others must follow directions. Without the leader and the led, all work would be that of the mob, — disconnected, useless, and undistributed.

Quite naturally the unperfected state of business, and of all other present action, creates and maintains abuses. The employer is not always fair, nor is the employee. Often they are, without justification, antagonistical to each other, many an employer demanding more work than he pays for, and many an employee being unwilling to earn his pay.

This condition is due to our lack of development, which will continue to breed unfairness, extortion, laziness, and even cruelty.

I do not propose to discuss capital and labor, nor to dwell upon the abuses practiced by some employers and the unfairness of the business men who seem to

feel that they, as hirers of labor, are made of different stuff and feed upon different meat, when, perhaps, at the start, they were lower mentally and financially than some of the poor fellows who are unfortunate enough to work for them.

Until the Golden Rule becomes a part of our code of law, a proportion of employers will be unfair and unkind and even cruel to their employees, and will see things only through their own glasses, with charity towards none.

Unfortunate, indeed, is the worker who finds himself under the lash of these men. The only thing that he can do is to get out at the earliest possible moment.

I am addressing my remarks to the salesman's side of the question.

It is the employee's duty to do his work in a business-like way, to be honest and square, faithful and reliable, whether his employer be a good man or a bad man, a fair master or a tyrant. The employee is working for himself, no matter how low down he may be. It is his duty to be true to himself, and he cannot be if he is unfaithful to the man he works for.

All of us began in the ranks, and our promotion is dependent upon the services we render, — our faithfulness, our obedience, and the development of our ability.

A large part of so-called unfairness on the part of the employer, and much of the cause of dissatisfaction, are imaginary. The employer in his unfinished state,

for none of us are fully developed, sees the world from his personal viewpoint, and, unfortunately, not always from that of the employee. He should be fairer because he began as an employee, and has had better opportunity to see both sides; while the employee, on the other hand, cannot very well view conditions except from his own standpoint. He has not as yet become an employer. Therefore he may be unreasonable through ignorance and inexperience, and it is quite likely that he will often imagine abuses which do not exist.

Discipline is necessary for any action, and it may appear to the disciplined to be unfair and unjust, because those in the ranks have not as wide a circle of experience.

The captain of an army or the manager of the business is carrying out a policy, which, to be properly met, must employ certain rules and regulations, and which does not always allow him to discriminate with absolute equity. He may be unfair without knowing it. He has under him a number of men, some of them honest and some the opposite, some active and some lazy, some satisfied and some dissatisfied, some fair and some unfair. To an extent he has to handle them at arm's length. He cannot take all of them into his private confidence. He has not the time, and may not have the inclination, to get as close to them as he should. He places them under discipline, some of it more or less automatic and arbitrary, because there appears to be no other way.

Undeveloped man, and none of us are close to the point of perfection, cannot dispense discipline as his better nature would suggest if it had a better opportunity.

The majority of employers intend to be fair, are considerate, and appreciate the work of their employees. They are so, partly because their good nature predominates, and because it is good business policy to be.

The employer is as much dependent upon the employee, collectively, as the employee is dependent, individually, upon the employer. But here is a difference, which many of us do not take into consideration: The relation of the employer to the employee is collective, or in mass, so to speak, except where there are few employees; while, on the other hand, the feeling of the employee towards his employer is individual or personal.

This condition is responsible for much of the existing trouble, — the employer sometimes looking upon the employee as a machine, and the employee demanding, at times, more personal recognition than the employer can possibly give if he would handle his business as business has, unfortunately, to be conducted.

The good and successful employee or salesman attends to his side of the business, and does not continually find fault with the man he works for, whether or not cause exists. He is gunning for business, and not hunting for trouble. He does his work faithfully and cheerfully, renders the best possible service, and accom-

plishes something in the end that must command the respect of any employer who is twenty-five per cent man.

If conditions are unbearable, he throws up his position, but only after deep and long consideration. He realizes that his employer has troubles and annoyances which no employee has to bear.

The employer carries the weight of the load. Business is hard. Profits may come slowly. There may be frequent losses. He may have to force himself against the current and may be among the rocks. He may have more money and great luxuries, but these come often from over-work and continuous worry.

Some men prefer to remain employees, and are better satisfied with good salaries and the minimum of worry than with commanding positions and the maximum of anxiety.

I am about to say something which may be misunderstood: No one believes in the equality of man more than I do. The man who does his best, whether he be a boot-black or the president of a corporation, is, or should be, recognized to be the business and social equal of any other man or of any body of men. He who does all he can, however little that accomplishment may be, is as great and as worthy as he who has conquered half of the world and expects to command the rest of it. No man can do more than his best.

The doing of business appears to be necessary, and to be a part of our education, leading to better things.

At any rate, business is going to exist for many years to come, and the improvement of business methods will necessarily be slow. For the present, and for some time, there will be a line drawn between employer and employee. The employer, for the time being and during business hours particularly, occupies a position superior to that of the employee. He may be mentally deficient and socially beneath some of those who work for him. He may have less intelligence and far less education. Some of his employees may be better able to command than he is; but, so long as he is in at the head, he must be obeyed; and the employee, like the soldier in the ranks, who refuses to follow orders, will never reach a commanding position.

Few men ever successfully handled a sword who had not as successfully carried a gun, and the great principles of military tactics apply with equal force to the action of business.

If you would look forward to a high position, if you expect the management of salesmen, if you would be ambitious and anxious to become a member of the firm, respect your employer while he is your employer and as your employer. Obey him in all that is right. Look up to him. Honor him. Even admire him and be proud of him, and always recognize him as your superior officer, better able to command you than you are to command him, until the time comes that you become commercially a fellow officer with him or his superior officer.

So long as you sell goods, you are rightly under the direction of somebody, who for the present is your superior, and who at the helm is better able to lay the course than are you who have never seen the chart-room and who are before the mast of business.

While you are in the forecastle of salesmanship, and have not become a ward-room officer, take off your hat to the man on the bridge if you would do your work better and gain promotion quicker.

Do not allow yourself to feel antagonistical toward the man you work for. Do not question his policies and his methods, unless they be dishonest. The fact that he is above you is *prima facie* evidence that he knows more than you do, has had more experience, and is entitled to his position. The better you work for him, the better you work for yourself; and the more you appreciate and honor the position you occupy as an employee, the quicker you will carry the sword of business, and wear the sash of honor, and command a company of workers.

WORKING FOR YOURSELF

EVERY member of the great and ever-increasing army of business, and every one connected with any kind of activity, either is in command of others or is under the command of others; that is to say, he is in the ranks, subject to constant orders, or he is in front of the ranks constantly giving orders.

Yet no one, not even the commander-in-chief, is wholly in charge of himself or of anybody else; and no one, even the slave, is entirely under orders.

The great commander, although his power may seem to be as broad as the field of all outdoors, is under some sort of discipline. He is subservient, at least, to the dictates of public opinion and to public policy. Therefore he is not, and never can be, the supreme authority.

The proprietor of the great department store, a massive structure housing two townfuls of workers, may seem to handle his business as a czar and to be beyond the slightest interference from others, yet he is the servant of his customers, is controlled by the composite policy of them, and is never thoroughly independent.

The great banker, who seems to be able to jingle in his hand the gold of his country, is not independent of banking interests, and is controlled by written and

unwritten laws made and enforced by the composite body of which he is a part.

We are all dependent upon others and subservient to conditions, — members of the working army of activity.

But, broadly speaking, there are two classes of workers, — the employer and the employee, — one in command and the other under orders; yet no one in whose veins runs a drop of red blood is wholly subservient to orders, for every one is in some command of himself, whether he be a hod-carrier or the controller of a railroad.

It is impossible to render efficient service unless the doer commands himself to do what he is commanded by others to do.

The salesman, even though he may be smarting under the discipline of the firm he works for and is under rigid rules and regulations, does not and cannot make more than an indifferent success, unless he feels that he is working for himself while he is working for another, unless he appreciates and honors his position, and feels responsible to himself for the work he does.

He must obey orders and follow the policy of the house he works for. He cannot personally settle the great questions for the firm, but he can settle great questions for himself and remain in command of himself while he is taking and following orders from others.

Unless he realizes that he is working for himself, no

matter how menial may be his position as an employee, he will never produce results worth while, either for himself or for anybody else.

Do not think that I am asking you to feel so important that you will chafe under the harness of discipline. So long as the world lives there must be commanders and commanded, and disobedience to orders invites failure; but there is a difference between being a bloodless machine or a mere puppet pulled by the invisible string of a regulator and the ability to respect yourself and to respectfully follow the direction of your superior.

The successful salesman cheerfully obeys orders, honors and respects his commander; yet, at the same time, he considers that the man he works for and himself combined constitute his real employer, and he is never forgetful that in whatever he does, whether he follows strict orders or not, he is first responsible to himself.

If he is not working for himself, he is not working at all, except as an automaton. If he is not proprietor of himself, he is unworthy of the bark of a friendly dog. If he does not appreciate and respect himself, and feel his personality and individuality, it is because he does not have any, and he is not, and cannot be, a salesman. It is impossible for him to do any effective work unless he is a partner in the transaction. To amount to anything he must consider himself a member of the firm. The more he feels it, and the

more he acts under this inspiration, the better off are his partners, his employers.

The highest self-respect does not interfere with discipline. The bravest soldier on the field is the one who respects himself so much that he can respect his commander, and he obeys orders, not wholly because they come from his superior officer, but because proper self-respect and intelligent policy command him to do as he is told to do.

The trouble with many employees, and especially salesmen, is that they do not sufficiently respect themselves to keep them from chafing under discipline and from cheerfully following orders. Because of lack of self-respect they have a false idea of their rights and a childish desire for independence. They forget that the discipline over the under-man is necessary to fit him to become the over-man, and that the harder one works for another, and the better he carries out another's policy, until he has a right to have one of his own, the more he is really working for himself and building up for himself the great asset of success, — reputation.

Every employee, whether he sweeps out the office, or dusts the desk, or stands behind the counter, or sells goods on the road, is from the start primarily working for himself, and a realization of this is the first step up the ladder of fame and fortune.

Duty to oneself is as important as duty to another, for self-duty enables one to better perform outside duties.

One cannot have too high a respect for himself, for respect does not exist without justification. Self-conceit is an entirely different affair. Self-respect does not make one wear plumes and strut through street or office, but enables him to properly measure and gauge himself and to do his best wherever he may be, and to respect himself as much when following orders as he would if he were giving orders.

The man who cannot with self-respect follow an order will never be permitted to order anybody else.

One of the reasons why so many remain in subordinate positions is because they do not realize that they have two commanders, — themselves and their employers, — and because they do not recognize that great law of business, and of profit, which does not permit the man who is unfaithful to himself to ever be faithful to others.

If you would succeed, no matter what your position may be, realize that you are both an employer and an employee, that you are your own commander first and always, you as commander of yourself taking orders from your superior officer, your employer. So long as you respect yourself as both your employer and employee, and your employer as the general-in-chief, following orders, not as a servant even though you occupy that position, but as a self-respecting worker, you are on the high-road to achievement.

ANTAGONIZING THE CUSTOMER

I HAVE reason to believe that there exists somewhere a perfectly calm, well-balanced, and nicely poised individual. I think I have seen him, but I may have been mistaken. The fellow I saw, however, who was supposed to have reached and to have maintained hair-spring equipoise, was a next-to-worthless sort of chap, physically sluggish, and with a mentality incapable even of disease. He was simply an automaton.

Most of us, especially if we amount to anything and are able to originate and do things out of the common, are not usually perfectly poised and are not always in good command of ourselves. Some of us seem to be born with the proverbial chip upon our shoulders, and by look and by word enjoin every one we meet to knock it off that we may have excuse for retaliation.

Lack of poise is a part of human nature, or, at least, of the brand now prevailing. For the present it cannot be fully conquered, and, perhaps, it will remain forever a part of the every-day world.

The strenuous life we are living, and the continuous tide of sorrows which flows deep enough to drown us, keep us on edge, and it is easy for us to slip and fall. Things which should not affect us at all, or concern us but slightly, often trouble us the most. We are

raw, and filled with mental sores, which pain us from the inside, and which, combined with outside annoyances, naturally make us morose and irritable.

This self-made and absorbed irritability antagonizes those we come in contact with, partly because they have similar troubles, for when trouble meets trouble there is a doubling up of trouble.

Every buyer is likely to be more or less worried, either in business or at home. It will not take much to throw him off his center.

The salesman may be in the same condition. Things do not run smoothly with him. It is natural for him to want to vent his troubles or his spleen upon the customer, and by so doing he cannot help antagonizing him, or irritating him, or doing something, or showing something, which is not conducive to the consummation of a sale.

There are some people who seem to have a naturally antagonistical disposition, who think they are worried or troubled whether they are or not, and who appear to delight in opposing those they come in contact with. This is undoubtedly a disease, and must be so treated, for it is obvious that no person would in his right mind deliberately injure himself that he may injure another. But it makes no difference whether we are antagonistical for cause or without it. We must conquer the outside appearance of it if we would be more than mediocre salesmen.

If we are worried and troubled, and feel like antag-

onizing every one we come in contact with, and seem to have a morbid delight in opposing others, we must get rid of that feeling, and act as though we had a glad hand for all the world, or else we must give up trying to sell goods and get a job flagging a train or standing as night-watchman for a house in the wilderness.

If the customer wanted to buy as much as the salesman wanted to sell him, the salesman could do as he pleased. But, as the salesman is the solicitor, — the asker, — he must maintain his equilibrium if he would effect a sale.

I have already said that comparatively few salesmen sell monopolies, that the customer can usually get what he wants without patronizing any one house. This being the case, the personality of the salesman counts mightily, and justifies me in making the statement that the chief reason why some people will not buy of some salesmen is because the salesmen antagonize them. They rub the customer the wrong way. They wear their troubles on their faces. They allow even a justifiable irritability to show, or they appear to be too important and to have more conceit than self-respect. If the customer gives them provocation for being disgusted, they show it at the sacrifice of good judgment and business, or they may over-force their goods and throw naked advice at the customer.

The customer wants a certain line of goods or a particular pattern. The salesman does not have it,

and he, in a supercilious way, crowds an unwelcome article upon the customer, forces upon him gratuitous advice in allopathic doses, and he makes the customer feel that he has no judgment, and that the salesman thinks he knows it all. Immediate antagonism sets in, or the salesman, for the best of reasons, objects to the purchase of certain articles, and, instead of advising the customer as a friend to buy something else, he expresses his objection in an arbitrary way, completely off-setting his good intentions.

Many a salesman is perceivably filled with a sense of his own importance. He appears to condescend to wait upon the customer, to make him feel that he is doing him a favor by waiting upon him. The opposite is right and good business.

Perhaps the customer cannot afford to buy first-class goods. Nothing interferes more with a sale than to make him ashamed of his limited pocket-book.

If the woman wants to purchase only a paper of pins, and second grade at that, so long as the quality will answer her purpose, or she cannot afford to buy what would be cheaper in the end, it is bad policy to give her any advice which she cannot take advantage of. If she is making a grave mistake, and there appears to be no reason why she should not buy something better, then advise her, but do it with care.

The stores which have built up a lasting and enviable reputation are those which recognize all customers as equal, whether they be poor or rich, sensible or

foolish, and which carry in regular stock ready for immediate delivery a complete assortment of good-will and courtesy.

While you are selling goods you must maintain your balance or you will fail. If you feel in an antagonistical mood, go away by yourself and take it out on yourself. Get rid of it, or cauterize it, before you meet the customer.

I am talking business fact, — cold-blooded selling fact. You must rid yourself of that antagonistical feeling or go out of the selling business. There is no other way.

When a customer asks for information, do not snap it at him. He has a right to ask foolish questions, and it is your business to answer them to the best of your ability. You probably would be as foolish on his ground as he is on yours.

Make every customer feel that you appreciate his orders.

Do not say: "Will that be all!" as though you were not satisfied with the size of the sale. You may politely suggest something else, or call his attention to some article; but make him feel that you appreciate his cents as well as his dollars. At least appear to value the five-cent buyer as much as the five-dollar purchaser.

If you offer advice, give it in a suggestive way. Never forget to say "thank you," or to use some other similar expression. Say something, if only a few words about the weather, which shows cordiality and

appreciation. Make the customer feel glad that he has bought of you and proud of his selection. If you switch him off from one thing to another, make him feel that he has done it, not you; that you brought these things to his attention, allowing him to make the decision.

If you find that certain expressions appear to antagonize the customer, change them for others.

Experiment with your tongue as well as with your manner, and strike a happy medium.

With a little effort, if you have selling instinct, you can tell whether the customer is pleased or not, or whether you antagonize him or not. Then do differently next time, if what you have done does not produce results.

You are going to antagonize a few, for the combined efforts of a thousand angels, multiplied a thousand times, will not satisfy some customers.

But the majority of people respond to politeness, and will appreciate the courteous salesman, even though they may appear not to do so.

Never wait for the customer to meet you. Be a little ahead of him. Anticipate his wants if you can. At any rate, appear to be interested. You must cater to him whether he be unreasonable or not, and keep from antagonizing him. If he is half-decent, and you are all-decent, you may succeed in selling him. If you do not, let the fault be his or the goods, not yours.

GETTING ACQUAINTED WITH THE CUSTOMER

The better you know your customer, and the more you know about him, the easier you can handle him. Comparatively few sales of any magnitude have been consummated between strangers. An acquaintance with the customer, personal or limited to some knowledge about him, appears to be necessary, and probably is, for most sales of consequence.

The traveling salesman considers it his duty to know something about the buyer before he approaches him. Of course, he does not refuse to meet the man he does not know or knows nothing about; but, if it is possible, he carries with him some general or specific knowledge of the person he proposes to meet.

It is obvious that the counter-man cannot know all of his customers or know anything about them, and it may be impossible for him to become at all acquainted with many of those he meets; but he should make an effort to become acquainted with them, to discover their likes and dislikes, their temperaments, and the quality and quantity of their buying. With this knowledge he can better present his goods and much easier consummate a sale. He can become acquainted with some of them, or learn something about them,

even though they may not feel acquainted with him.

There is a social side to selling. Few good buyers or good salesmen exclusively confine their conversation to business. The buyer often speaks of other things, and he expects the salesman to meet him half way, and the salesman may at times take the initiative if he is acquainted with the customer or knows something about him. This acquaintanceship, which may ripen into friendship, places the salesman in a profitable position.

Of course, one must not be objectionably familiar, and should not forget that business is business, and that friendship is not universally considered a part of business. But acquaintanceship, with or without friendship, is always to be desired.

The bright salesman will get inside of his customer, so to speak; find out about him, know him, and be, therefore, prepared to meet him on his ground, to do and say things which he wants, and to create a certain social atmosphere in trade which smooths the rough edges of business-doing.

While it is impossible to become acquainted with all customers, or to know anything about more than a proportion of them, quiet inquiry will bring to the salesman a vast amount of workable knowledge of who and what the customers are and of what they like and dislike.

Traveling salesmen can easily obtain advance

information from the salesmen who preceded them, or from other salesmen, so that they seldom find it necessary to meet a buyer entirely unknown to them.

The reason why many retail salesmen do not know their customers is because they make no effort to become acquainted with them. They act as automatons, selling a customer if they can, and without making any effort to bring him back for subsequent purchases. They seem to be satisfied with the first sale, and take no thought of the second, notwithstanding that any sale following the first sale is likely to be much more profitable.

Many a salesman is more of a waiter than a coaxer of trade. He stands behind the counter and does what he cannot very well help doing. He does not volunteer or take the initiative. He is not a true salesman, and because he is not, he receives a low salary, which is probably as much as he is worth. So far as one can see, he has no interest in the store he works in, the goods he sells, or the people who buy them. He is not promoted, because he does not deserve to be. His customers appear to pass before him like moving pictures on a screen.

Often we find one who respects the man he works for, who is interested in the goods he sells, and who is not indifferent to the customer. Unless the concern is of the lowest order, this interest is appreciated, usually substantially.

Part of the success of this salesman is due to a sort

of informal acquaintanceship he has with his customers. He may not know their names, but he knows them, and they may not know who he is, but they feel acquainted with him. Between this salesman and the customer springs a sort of friendly acquaintanceship, a something which makes it easier for them to trade together.

Probably, in most cases, he has become acquainted with his customers from coming in contact with them. From their own lips and from their own manners he has ascertained their characteristics, their likes and dislikes. He knows something about them, and can, therefore, handle them to advantage; yes, to mutual advantage, for this sort of business initiative enables the seller to sell at greater profit and the buyer to buy to greater advantage.

The traveling salesman knows, or should know, the name of the buyer, that he may address him by name. This condition cannot universally prevail behind the counter, but a little effort on the part of the salesman will enable him to call many a customer by name.

Nothing pleases the customer more than to be addressed by name by the salesman he does not know. It almost invariably creates a good impression and establishes a sort of friendship. How much better it is to address a lady in front of the counter with "Good morning, Mrs. Smith," than with "What can I do for you, madam?"

Every store has regular customers, even though

they may not carry charge accounts. A proportion of the goods are delivered, and the salesman has the opportunity of ascertaining the name of the customer. He should remember it and the face, that he may address him by name the next time he calls. After he has found out the name of the customer, it is well to repeat it often, but without over-doing it. If a customer is making extensive purchases, it is easy to address him by name from twice to a dozen times during the sale. This simple art of knowing the name, and of using it, has great selling value.

Do not think that you cannot become acquainted with some of your customers, or that you cannot learn their names. You can if you want to, and if you want to you are sure to make the necessary effort. If you do not do it, it is because you will not, not because you cannot.

PERSONAL APPEARANCE

The outside of man or of woman does not make either of them or stand for intrinsic quality and real ability. Among folks who think and have well-thought-out ideals, dress and other personal adornment count for practically nothing. They are known by what they are and they judge others fairly.

But business is an entirely different proposition. Its ethics are its own. It is arbitrary and commanding, always doing as it pleases, sometimes outraging the better part of life and establishing a code of morals which are not more than technically right.

Fortunately or unfortunately, men of business are judged to an extent, often to a great extent, by their personal appearance.

Because our clothes are always in evidence, what we wear, and all parts of us which can be seen, are of commercial consequence.

The over-dressed man and woman never command respect even among their kind. Over-dressing is against good taste, good morals, good breeding, self-respect, and good business.

Business ethics demands that its people dress becomingly and make a neat and appropriate appearance, of which extravagance is not a part.

True, some salesmen are of unkempt appearance, and are often actually unclean; and yet they sell goods in spite of that; but it is certain that they would do more business if they gave attention to personal habits and appearances.

But do not forget that even the best clothes made by the best tailors do not add to one's appearance, if they are not kept clean and are not in harmony with the face and figure. Clean clothes are more essential than good clothes.

The inexpensively dressed man, with shoes blacked, his clothes well brushed and pressed, makes a better appearance, and is better attired for business, than is he of fashionable but untidy garments. Perhaps you cannot help looking shabby, but you can look clean.

The well-dressed person, or, rather, the properly dressed person, is one whose clothes attract no particular attention, because they are in such perfect taste that no one part of them can stand out in relief. If there is something startling or striking about the dress, the owner will be known by the clothes he wears, and this is against him. No one should be conspicuously dressed, for conspicuousness is always in bad taste.

Comparatively few of us can tell how the well-dressed person is dressed. We simply know that his garments are appropriate and in harmony with him.

Proper dress is a part of the person wearing it, and harmonizes with him, and he is seen as a completed

whole and not recognized by any particular pattern, or fabric, or necktie.

Finery, and especially cheap finery, should be avoided. The gaudy watch-chain is in bad taste, and so is the flashy necktie, or any conspicuous display of jewelry, or anything else for show only.

Not only should we be comfortable, but we should look comfortable.

There is no excuse for unblacked shoes or for the unshaved face. The linen should be spotlessly clean.

No man should use perfumery, and I see no reason why this rule should not apply to women.

Women, especially, should avoid that loud or flashy look which so many seem to think is a necessary part of business.

The hands should be clean, and the finger nails well taken care of.

Many a woman injures her commercial value by the dress of her hair. If she does not know how to do it up properly, let her consult some one who does.

Business men and women should dress to please others, not themselves, to be acceptable to the majority of people they come in contact with.

Adornment for mere personal gratification is sheer selfishness and shows the very extreme of personal vulgarity.

Neatness is always essential, from the top of the head to the bottom of the shoes; and outside neatness is impossible without inside cleanliness.

The face is, to an extent, the mirror of character. At any rate, we are often judged by our facial expression and appearance. Clothes should, therefore, harmonize with the face and figure. A fabric which looks well on one may injure the appearance of another.

Many of us make a mistake by constant change. We over-rate the value of variety. We do not want two suits alike, or anywhere near alike, and this change operates against our outward appearance.

I do not mean to say that one should wear the same fabric all of the time, if one particular kind becomes him, but I advise him not to depart far from an acceptable style and pattern.

Loud styles and patterns should always be avoided. When in doubt, use the plainest designs and the simplest cloths.

The foolish woman, who over-dresses herself, who turns her body into a frame for the hanging of ultra styles, despises the woman who looks as she does, for no woman, not even the worst offender, has any respect for the over-dressed. Conspicuous clothes should be limited to the stage. They have no place in every-day life.

Unusual adornment, and the attempt to look smart, antagonize the buyer, even though he or she may be superlative monuments of the vulgarity of style.

The tendency to over-dress on the part of the fresh drummer is to be deplored. He may do business in spite of making an ass of himself.

The girl behind the counter can do little to greater injure herself and her trade than to make a show of herself by the striking appearance of her clothes.

We are nearing an age of simplicity. Simplicity has become an art. Our best people are applying the principles of simplicity to the clothes they wear.

So long as you remain a salesman, you, as well as your goods, are for sale, or, rather, you are a part of the transaction. While you occupy this position it is as necessary for you to well present yourself as it is for you to well present your goods. You cannot separate the two.

If you would do good business, carry to your buyer the best you have in merchandise, and the best you have in actual self and in the appearance of it.

GOOD NATURE IN SELLING

The selling-end official of one of the most successful American corporations, employing a small army of salesmen, said to me, in all seriousness and emphatically, that he considered good nature the greatest essential to profitable salesmanship. He claimed that his observations and experiments, covering a period of a quarter of a century, led him to feel positive that this quality — good nature — was worth more than anything else in the consummation of trade.

The reputation of his house is world-wide, and to my friend is due in no small measure the international position which it occupies. He is in charge of the salesmen and of everything pertaining to the output of the product, and is, therefore, largely responsible for the selling success of the business.

What he says is worthy of the greatest respect, and I would not take exceptions to it, if other equally proficient managers of salesmen did not differ from him in not placing good nature at the apex of the selling monument.

But whether he is right or wrong, good nature is one of the prime essentials to successful salesmanship. Without it, it is well nigh impossible to sell goods, except to the few who insist upon having what is offered.

The over-dignified man, or he who is morose, whose face is lined with a map of disappointment, cannot rub elbows with the trade or extend the glad-hand to anybody.

While too much familiarity is objectionable and defeats many a sale, good nature, even too great a display of it, makes no enemies, is sure to create a good impression, and is largely responsible for the formation and maintenance of business friendship.

Notwithstanding that the action of business is often heartless and sometimes cruel, and that sentiment is not supposed to enter into the composition of trading, there is such a thing as friendship in business.

So long as human nature exists, likes and dislikes will play leading roles on every stage of life. Many of our firmest friendships grew from business connections, and many a buyer and salesman are chums.

It is said that it does not pay to do business with friends and that it is unprofitable to cultivate friendship between buyer and seller. Perhaps the statement borders on the truth, but it is a fact that the first-class buyer and salesman usually meet harmoniously and profitably upon both the business and social field.

As a rule real friendship does not interfere with any action, and is an aid to selling and to business-doing. Therefore, anything which contributes to it benefits the parties involved.

Do not misunderstand me. I am not asking the salesman to become the chum or the intimate friend

of his customer. This condition would be impossible, except with a selected few; but I do say that good fellowship between buyer and seller not only robs selling of much of its disagreeableness, but is a profitable asset which should be cultivated by both sides.

There are expert salesmen who seem to live within the hard shell of an assumed but never a natural dignity, for natural dignity is approachable. These men succeed, or, at least, they are not failures. They smile not, neither do they laugh. They have no sense of humor. Their action is automatic, and automatically they work.

But take the great rank and file of successful salesmen, whether on the road or behind the counter, the men who do business are usually those who radiate good nature.

The buyer may do what he pleases. He is seldom obliged to trade with any one man or at any one store. He has, or he assumes, the right of discrimination for and against the goods and the seller of them. If he personally likes the salesman, he is glad to see him or does not object to seeing him; and if he sees him and talks with him, he places himself under his influence. If the salesman has a pleasant face and manner, he will do much to dispel the gloom which is often present in the buyer's office; and this radiation of cheerfulness cannot help adding to the selling chances of the salesman.

Many a man with a thorough knowledge of his

goods and an ability to talk understandingly has failed to make good because of his lack of cheerfulness and of the shadow he casts around him when he attempts to present a selling argument.

But avoid being too familiar, particularly with the buyers you do not know well. Good nature does not need to descend to that. It does not have to travel on a train of jokes or depend upon funny stories, both of which have their places.

The good nature which is a selling asset is that dignified or well-regulated cordiality, that lighting up of the face, that seeming to be on good terms with yourself and the world, that something which makes people glad to see you and sorry to have you go; and if they are glad to see you they will talk to you and let you talk to them. When they allow that, half of the selling battle is won.

Most of us need cheering up, for business is hard and losses are frequent. The buyer is close to the troubles of his business. He carries the heavy weights of loss. The good-natured salesman brings to him a ray of sunshine, which he appreciates and for which he may reciprocate.

CONSERVATISM AND TAKING CHANCES

The field of business is divided by a very high and a very strong fence. On one side are the conservatives, on the other the liberals and those popularly supposed to represent the more progressive element.

Just here may I not take an exception to applying progressiveness wholly to the liberal, for the conservative may not be unprogressive, although his enterprise does not appear to be so much in evidence?

Thoroughly conservative men, even those who represent the old-fashioned moss-backs, have achieved fame and fortune; and men of opposite tendencies, the most liberal in action, have made as great or greater successes. Both have their place in the economy and action of business, and the two classes will for many years continue to exist, to be eventually amalgamated.

But I think that the man of superlative success, who gets the most out of his opportunities, is a composite man, a liberal-conservative or a conservative-liberal, a man of both action and vision, always cautious, and yet not unwilling to consider the taking of reasonable chances whenever he can afford to experiment.

The element of risk exists in all business-doing. The man who will not move until the "surety-of-certainty" is guaranteed seldom moves at all. The stagnant pool

behaves itself. There is not a drop of liberalism in its muddiness, while the on-rushing river occasionally damages the property on either side of it; but it moves, and to its activity must be credited more profit than loss.

Just the right amount of conservatism, mixed with a similar volume of liberalism, accomplishes the completeness of result; but I doubt if this compound ever contained an equal amount of both, for I have never seen a business man who had not made mistakes.

The perfectly balanced man of business would never err in judgment. He could not fail except by outside pressure. If this individual lives, he has never come inside the horizon of my sight, and I do not know of any one who has seen him.

As none of us are perfect, and as all of us must err in judgment, and as there is always a risk in business-doing no matter how conservatively it may be maintained, we must recognize both the conservative and liberal methods of doing things, leaning for safety's sake towards conservatism when in doubt, and yet not afraid to take reasonable chances unless family or other responsibilities require us to be over-slow that we may be nearer-sure.

I very much doubt if any great success was ever made unaccompanied with some risk. But there is a marked difference between desperate risk, fool-hardy plunges, and the taking of legitimate chances.

No one should stake his all unless compelled to do

so. If he have both feet firmly planted upon the conservative road to accomplishment, he is justified in experimenting with both arms and hands. He may look into the sky if he will. He may be a man of vision as well as of action. He may try to see far into the future, even though he is not able to diagnose it with full exactness. The man without vision, who does not once in a while turn his eyes to the clouds and make pictures out of their curious formations, is too firmly planted on earth to move with the speed of success; while, on the other hand, the visionary man, who is unanchored somewhere, is without a traveled orbit and is like the mariner without a chart or a compass. He does not know where he is or where he is going to land.

Let us suppose, for example, that you are going to meet a certain customer. Perhaps you do not know him and have no time to find out his characteristics, and cannot, therefore, frame in advance any method of action. If you are too aggressive or too progressive, you may offend him. If, on the other hand, you are too conservative, you may not get close enough to him to consummate a sale. In this particular case the best you can do is to take reasonable chances, rather leaning towards conservatism than away from it. Here the activity of your mind comes into play, and the brain of the successful salesman is always alert. He is able to change from hot to cold, or *vice versa*, at a moment's notice. If he makes a mistake, he can usually correct it before

it is too late. He exercises caution at the start, branching from it as conditions permit or suggest.

Experience is the best teacher. I know of no other way of rightly mixing caution and its opposite. But do not be discouraged if your compound is not just right. Perfect conditions do not exist. You will learn from failure as well as from the success you make, and a few of the former may contribute mightily to your up-building.

Try to be as sure as you can be, always remembering that you can never be fully sure.

Your time is limited. You must learn to judge quickly, and sometimes instantaneously. Prepare for each case as much as possibility admits. Do not throw yourself at chance. But when you are rounded up at the crack of the business whip it is usually better to do something and say something than to do nothing and keep still.

Cling to the rock of conservatism, but do not become so much a part of it that you cannot trust yourself to leave it when conditions suggest a leave of absence. When you leave it, however, do not go so far away that you cannot get back to it.

RESPECT YOUR EMPLOYER

THERE is an unwritten law of business, from which there is no appeal, making your employer or manager your superior during the action of business. He is in command. You are under command. Without commanders the soldiers of business would degenerate into a mob, uncontrolled and doomed to death. So long as present business remains, the business army must be divided, the employer to be the officer in command, the employee to be subject to command.

There can be no discipline, no connected work, no successful endeavor, without the commander and the commanded, the one to direct, the other to follow. This condition exists in every department of work, from the street laborer to the manufacturer.

Because the employer is, for the time being, the superior of the employee, he has a right to expect and to demand, not only faithfulness, but respect on the part of the employee.

Few ever successfully commanded who have not successfully worked under command. Therefore, if you chafe in the harness, refuse to be guided by your driver, and to respect him while in the field of business, you are not likely to be fit to hold the reins of direction.

If you cannot give your employer some measure of respect and look up to him while at work, there is

something diametrically the matter with you or with him. If it is with you, get it out of your system at any cost, and learn to respect the man you work for just as long as you are with him. If the trouble is with him, get another position as soon as you can. Or go out into the streets and dig drains, or do some other kind of work which requires little but the exercise of brainless muscle.

You can never hope to succeed as an employee, or to maintain your position at the head of anything, unless you succeed in respecting your position so much that you cannot help respecting the man over you.

The chances are that he would not be above you in business, if he were not, for the time being, a better man than you are; and it is not likely that he will remain in command of you after you have demonstrated that you are a better man than he is.

Ninety-nine and nine-tenths per cent of the men who chafe under discipline, who have little respect for their managers, who are constantly back-biting and fault-finding, and who feel that they are superior to their environment and possess greater ability than do those above them, are unworthy of promotion and unfit to assume responsibility.

The world has produced few leaders fit to lead who have not been successfully led. It is unlikely that you can direct the efforts of others until you have learned how to direct by being directed, even if you have back of you all the universities in the land.

The man above you is probably there because he deserves to be. You are below him probably because you are not sufficiently disciplined and proficient to work beside him or above him.

Occasionally, the employee is more competent than the employer, but this condition occurs too seldom to be taken into consideration.

The position we occupy may be the one we are fit to fill, and we can never hope to rise from it until we have properly filled that position and have rendered to our superiors the respect and duty due them.

Lack of respect, even for those deserving little of it, if they be our managers, breeds dissatisfaction, and is one of the germs which stunt the growth of ambition; while proper respect, — and I mean business respect for those above us in business, — produces that right balance of mind and body which starts one on the right road to a successful future.

DOING WHAT YOU DO NOT HAVE TO DO

The world of workers may be separated into a hundred, or two hundred, or, perhaps, several hundred classes of money-earners; but there are four distinct kinds of men and women, especially sales-people, viz.:

The first is filled with the lazy and indifferent, whether competent or incompetent, who go and come by the clock when they move at all, and who work neither for themselves nor for their employers. Some of them earn a living, most of them a very poor one, and the names of none of them appear in any roll of accomplishment.

The second group includes the technically faithful and honest, who move slowly and by rule, who have little ambition; but they do in a mechanical way what they are told to do. Most of them are able to earn a livelihood.

Under the third classification, I would place those who are conscientious, honorable, honest, faithful, and painstaking, who have some ambition, a desire to better themselves and to make full return for what they receive. To a large extent they do their best as they see it. They are on hand to receive orders and execute them to the best of their ability. They never reach the flush of success, but they are usually well-to-do and are seldom subject to adverse criticism.

The fourth class carries few members. Each representative of it is a marked man or woman who is at the top or close to it. The great captains of achievement belong to this grade. Their incomes, if they are salesmen or follow commercial pursuits, are larger, and often many times larger, than are others in their line. They are ambitious to the extreme, always faithful, and yet their superlative success is not due wholly to their honesty or to their faithfulness, although both of these qualities count mightily. They have reached their present positions because they did a vast deal of what they were not told to do, what they did not have to do, and what was not a regular part of their duty. They followed orders, and did more. They never lost an opportunity to do something which was not specified in the written or verbal order or request of their employers. They worked over hours, if the extra work would accomplish anything and was not likely to injure them. They became more familiar with the business and the goods they sold than they were required to be. They used their spare time in familiarizing themselves, not only with ordinary conditions, but with everything pertaining to the business inside and out of it. They were always ready to do more than told to do, and they looked for these opportunities and improved them. They made themselves a literal part of the business, far beyond ordinary requirements.

Every employer expects his salesmen to be faithful, honest, and painstaking, and to do as they are told to

do; but he does not and cannot demand more than this. It is optional with the salesman or employee. If he does what he is told to do, his work will be recognized and he will not remain at the bottom of the ladder; but there is no height to which he cannot attain if he of his own volition learns things and does things which never appear in orders.

The man who is strictly honest and faithful, and who follows rules and regulations, deserves promotion and is to be commended; and we should recognize him even though his virtues are negative and but a display of ordinary qualities, the sort of fellow who does nothing bad, and is never a candidate for a jail sentence. His goodness has kept him free from arrest, but it has accomplished little else.

The salesman who does only what he has to do is faithful, but commendable only in a passive way, and is entitled only to conventional praise; while the man who possesses all of these qualities, with the addition of constant and persistent activity, is sure to reap a reward which cannot be given to those who do only what they have to do or what they are told to do.

Superlative success-making depends upon doing what you are told to do and what you are not told to do, — what you must do and what you need not do. One without the other invites failure. Together they lead to the tip-top of accomplishment.

THE KNOCKER

Complete satisfaction is self-idolatry. This world is no place for the thoroughly satisfied. Sensible dissatisfaction with self and surroundings is essential to the ripening of character and to the making of success, provided it is normal and does not exceed a reasonable quantity.

But there is a vast difference between too much satisfaction and debilitating dissatisfaction. The employee who is thoroughtly dissatisfied with his position and prospects without intelligent reason is not likely to reach more than ordinary achievement. He is doomed to present or to perpetual failure. He cannot have more than a slight grip upon his business, a hold which will be loosened at the slightest pressure.

I am not asking the employee, whether he be a salesman or not, to continuously remain in complete harmony with business conditions; or to always believe implicitly in the business policy of his house, or to feel that he could not in time be better situated, or that there is no one in the world as well off as he is; but I do wish to exclaim with all the emphasis of printed words that dissatisfaction is one of the pre-eminent elements of failure.

Perfection is impossible in business or out of it. Conditions are never wholly right. The ideal environ-

ment is seen by the man of vision, and he has never been able to materialize it. On either side is trouble, often real, sometimes imaginary. There is no straight road from anywhere to somewhere, nor is there any road-bed smooth and even or easy to travel upon.

Sensible and well-founded dissatisfaction may help one to rise, but general dissatisfaction either wounds or kills.

If you are dissatisfied with your present position more than in spots, or now and then, there is something the matter with you, or there is something the matter with your position, or there is something the matter with both. It is your duty to find out, and to make the discovery with all reasonable speed.

If you are to blame, get this feeling of dissatisfaction out of you at any cost. If you are not, either adapt yourself to conditions or get out. Do not remain in any atmosphere reeking with insurmountable difficulties. The brave soldier never stands upon sinking ground. It is more noble to run away than it is to attempt to stand firmly on nothing. But a large percentage of the dissatisfaction felt by the employee may be in his own imagination or is of much thinner quality than he thinks it is.

The majority of employees join the ranks of the "Knockers" when they enter business. They are surrounded by earlier "Knockers," — men who are dissatisfied, because they are not strong enough to be satisfied, and who build mountains out of the sand that they may stumble over their self-made handicaps.

These "Knockers" are always in evidence, — in the store, behind the counter, and on the road. They are busier finding fault than they are correcting faults. They labor harder than the faithful worker does, and actually become self-tired from doing nothing to remedy anything. They are the microbes of failure, greedy and vindictive, unwilling to injure themselves alone, but desirous of bringing every one else to their level.

Their work is indifferently done. Their ambition, if they ever had any, is reduced to the minimum. They come and go by clock, and would never be on time if they could help themselves.

They have no interest in anything, not even in themselves. They are not in favor of any kind of human betterment, any kind of progress, any kind of action, except the ability to kick, knock, and growl.

They would not be tolerated if their employers could get others; but, as they are so much in the majority, and as they can be made to do stereotyped work, they are hired on the market, stalled, fed, and driven.

Much of the unfairness, and even cruelty, practiced by employers would never have occurred if it had not been for the "Knocker," who cannot be considered as a man, because he resembles man in form only.

Some employers gradually become drivers rather than leaders of men. I am not excusing them. They should know better, and they are certainly intelligent enough to discriminate, but as I am addressing this

book to the employee, it is out of place for me to either praise or find fault with the other fellow.

A reasonable amount of self-satisfaction, and a general satisfaction with surroundings, are absolutely necessary for business success, and especially for the salesman.

If he cannot weather the breezes of the present, he will be wrecked by the storm of the future. He should throw his whole heart into his work, and he cannot do so if he is not satisfied with himself, with his employer, and with his business.

Don't be a "Knocker." Look for the good things rather than the bad ones, and the more you do, the more of them you will find, and the more of them you find, the more insignificant will the bad things appear to be and the less they will affect you.

Overcome dissatisfaction with satisfaction. The bed of business is not made of feathers. The "soft snaps" you hear about seldom materialize.

Business is business. If you are to be a part of it, be satisfied with it. If you cannot be satisfied, or reasonably so, get out; and, perhaps, you will not be quite so big a failure in something else; but the chances are that you have little in you of the stuff that success is made of.

The "Knocker" knocks himself, and his knocking is never heard inside of the door of accomplishment.

TELLING THE TRUTH

It is a fact that a proportion of salesmen misrepresent the goods they sell, intentionally or unintentionally, because they are required to do so or because they are laboring under the delusion that it is easier to make sales by so doing.

For the moment, let me disregard the moral side of truth-telling and give no consideration to the right or wrong of misrepresentation, that I may consider lying exclusively from the standpoint of business, for then I may commercially justify it if I can prove it pays financial profit.

Do not misunderstand me, and do not for a fraction of a second think that I would advise any one to lie or to misrepresent in business, even if by so doing he would double his profits, because money-getting is but a small part of human action, and the loss of self-respect and integrity can never be offset by any amount of financial gain.

The liar or the thief in business and out of it may at times profit by his rascality so far as financial return is concerned, but he is a pitiful, a miserable, and a contemptible fellow, respected by none, not even by the herd of hirelings who smile upon him and are but the hypocritical reflections of the money they get out of him.

But, because misrepresentation plays a part in the business of the world, and because there is undoubtedly reason to believe that lying will sometimes bring financial profit, I propose to discuss the truth and the lie without reference to the moral side of either of them.

Does it pay to misrepresent goods or to otherwise lie in business? Yes, sometimes, if you have no respect for yourself, if you have no conscience and sense of honor, if you do not expect to meet the customer again, if you are selling fake goods, if you are willing to sacrifice your customer after the first sale, getting out of him all you can and getting through with him then and there, and if you can cover up your misrepresentation, so whitewash your lie that its blackness will not be seen until the sale is consummated, then, and then only, lying becomes a business commodity with some financial value.

But if you are in business to stay, and consider the first sale as only initiative, the beginning of profit, the first sowing of the seed intended to grow an everlasting harvest, then the truth is absolutely necessary to profit and to the up-building of any kind of a business monument which is not likely to topple and fall when the winds of trade blow against it.

The stores which last, and remain permanent successes, are those which treat the customer honestly and fairly and look upon trade as a mutual exchange, the seller and the buyer each receiving an equal advantage.

The salesman should represent his goods as they

are, tacitly admitting that he is selling them at a profit, but at a price which will be satisfactory to the buyer. He does not pretend to be in business for the fun of it. He is there to make money. But, notwithstanding, he is in a position to benefit the buyer.

Enthusiasm is to be encouraged, that which comes from honest confidence in the goods, and, at times, it may border upon exaggeration; but this may not be always considered commercially dishonest. Certainly one has a right to be enthusiastic and to present the best side of the story. But if this exaggeration or enthusiasm is carried beyond reasonable bounds, and the best side of the goods is presented to cover up the bad side, the customer will sooner or later get at the truth of it and will not be "at home" the next time the salesman calls.

Successful salesmanship consists in not only selling the goods to the profit of the seller, but to the profit of the buyer. Both must be satisfied. Otherwise trade cannot be continuous.

Of course, there are concerns which continue in business and succeed by every form of sharp practice. They misrepresent continuously. Their salesmen are known as liars and their goods are unreliable. Occasionally they hold a customer for a while, but not often. Most of them fail, and some of them make money by so doing. They succeed by taking fearful risks. They are gamblers and cheats, and when they win they do so because they have struck the luck of

the charlatan. No matter how successful they may appear to be, or really are for the time being, back of their business is absolutely no good-will, no reputation, no asset beyond the cost of their goods.

There is a class of buyers, store-keepers and the like, who are willing to take chances, to play an unfair game of business, and there are many retail buyers who pride themselves on their sharpness. These people will occasionally trade at a questionable store. They like to play the game, but when it comes to buying something worth while they go to a reliable concern.

This class of trade has little permanent value. It runs at high pressure, is controlled by chance, whims, and the gambling instinct, and is subject to leaks and accidents.

I am aware that some sales-people connected with large establishments, and some of those on the road, are ordered to misrepresent their goods. They must do it or get out. If you are connected with one of these concerns, and have any respect for yourself, and desire to make a permanent success, it is your moral and business duty to resign at the first opportunity.

Connect yourself with a reliable house, if you would succeed. Unless you can inspire your customer with confidence in you and in your goods, you cannot continue to do business with him.

One permanent customer is worth many transient buyers.

One of the great fundamental elements of successful

salesmanship is the salesman's ability to inspire the buyer with confidence. This is impossible, except transiently, unless the salesman is honest with the buyer. Take confidence out of salesmanship and you have turned the business mart into a den of gamblers. Without confidence there can be no business except the barter of savagery.

No salesman ever succeeded who did not inspire confidence, and there is absolutely no way of creating it except by honesty and by always telling the truth.

I am not claiming that all business-doing is honest. I must admit that dishonesty and misrepresentation seem to have become a part of the great fabric of trade, but the dishonesty which has, or seems to have, a permanent commercial value is confined to methods, to policies, to unfair competition, and to illegal consolidation. And these very law-breaking concerns in their dishonesty of method demand strict honesty on the part of their salesmen, both to themselves and to their customers, and they refuse to misrepresent their goods, not because of conscience or of morality, but from business policy. They know that they cannot continue to do profitable business if their salesmen misrepresent or lie. They realize that they are more dependent upon the customer than is the customer dependent upon them. They, therefore, although permeated with dishonesty, are honest to their customers.

The business liar is sure to be discovered, and that being the case, lying is not a selling asset.

The truth-telling salesman, the confidence-inspirer, usually succeeds. The life of a lying salesman hangs by a thread, sure to break at the slightest strain.

If your present position prevents you from telling the truth, make a change. You can never succeed where you are unless you are willing to take gamblers' chances, to be satisfied with present profit, and to get along without a permanent name and reputation.

Honesty is the only safe business policy for those who would stay in business.

MODESTY IN SELLING

While modesty is a prime and fundamental virtue, which is not likely to be over-cultivated or developed, by itself alone it has little intrinsic business value, and an over-abundance of it prevents success-making and is fatal to good salesmanship.

Those who pride themselves upon their modesty usually possess the least of it, for the self-gratification that accompanies modesty, if such a condition is possible, is the worst kind of modesty.

It is difficult to draw the line between self-respect and self-conceit. They naturally dove-tail, and we are not likely to have either in its pure state.

Because we do not know ourselves, we are unable to completely separate self-respect, with its accompanying modesty, from self-conceit; nor does there appear to be any particular need of producing this separation to the fineness of a chemical analysis.

Too much genuine self-respect is impossible. An over-abundance of self-conceit is not only objectionable, but disastrous.

I have never known any man of achievement, from the star-gazer to the grocer, who was not conceited, to an extent, at least. His command of self and his

strong mental poise, while not opposed to true modesty, carry with them sufficient self-respect to run over into self-conceit.

Commercially speaking, some self-conceit, well mixed with self-respect and flavored with modesty, is by no means an unbusinesslike asset; and it will be a part of business success, until we have become fully civilized.

The over-modest man does not succeed in selling goods. He who is afraid of himself as well as of others is doomed to failure.

True, the thoroughly conceited man is as badly off as is the man of over-flowing modesty, the difference between the two being that the former is an objectionable failure, while the latter is a harmless one.

Knowledge of any kind breeds self-respect. If it does not, it is not real knowledge; and those who really know things are not likely to be self-opinionated.

Modesty, then, may interfere with proper self-respect, by throwing knowledge out of balance, making it ineffective; while proper self-respect uses it as a building-block, or as a stepping-stone, or for some other part of the structure of achievement.

If you are abnormally modest, afraid of yourself, and have little respect for yourself or for your work, shun the selling side of business. Really, there is no place on the business earth for you; certainly none as a seller of goods.

Yet beware of self-conceit. If you have it, or mistrust that you have it, so mix it into the flour of

self-respect that it may be kneaded into acceptable bread.

Hold on to self-respect as you would to a life-preserver. It will buoy you up when it is calm, and hold you up in a storm. Without it, you can do nothing, certainly you cannot sell goods.

Do not despise modesty, but do not make a specialty of it while on the road or behind the counter.

You hear much talk, and most of it is but the sound of a rattle, about the pronounced and conspicuous modesty of great men, that they are retiring and really do not care to receive their deserts. These men simply appear to be what you may think they are, but down in their hearts is a definite self-respect, a reaching out for what belongs to them, without which they could not have become great or even half-prosperous. They may be over-modest in the things they do not care about, but they are like a solid wall when it comes to the things they love and practice.

The self-respect and proper confidence of the salesman extend to the goods he sells.

COURTESY AND POLITENESS

The terms courtesy and politeness apparently more than really are synonymous. Politeness is somewhat shallow, and its quality may not be deeper than the surface. Courtesy, on the other hand, may be but a veneer, but it should be made of sterner and more substantial stuff. An action of courtesy may give one something, and be of material benefit, both to giver and receiver, while politeness may not be more substantial than a contribution to transient pleasure.

Some sales-managers consider courtesy as the greatest essential to successful salesmanship.

A friend of mine, who has profitably managed hundreds of salesmen, and who is recognized as one of the best sales-directors in the country, told me, without qualification, that he considered courtesy of more value in selling goods than even a knowledge of the goods and the ability to properly present them.

I am not prepared to agree with him to this extent. I think he is placing upon courtesy a burden greater than it can bear, but I do believe that no one can succeed in selling goods, be better than an ordinary salesman, who is not both courteous and polite, and who does not consider these attributes essential selling assets.

I present two concrete examples, both coming within my immediate experience:

Some time ago I made a trans-continental trip. The night before my arrival home, most of the men in one of the sleepers gathered in the smoking compartment, told stories and swapped experiences. A gentleman, with a strong face which showed determination well-balanced with great experience, acted as a sort of chairman.

My turn came, and, among other things, I gave the names of the railroads over which I had traveled.

Interrupting, the chairman asked me how I was impressed with the conduct of the A. & B. and B. & C. Railroads.

I told him that I proposed to be a sort of walking advertisement for the A. & B., to speak in the highest terms of its equipment, its management, and the territory through which it passed. But I added that its trains were over-crowded, some of the supply-cars failed to connect with the diners, and that I had difficulty in obtaining my meals regularly and sleeping accommodations.

"Then why do you speak so well of it?" the chairman asked.

"I will tell you why," I replied. "As a stranger, I called at the office of this railroad in a distant city, and made inquiries as to the best trains to take and the best places to stop over at, that I might not miss the best scenery. A middle-aged man, with a pleasant

face, not only greeted me as a friend, but he came from back of the counter and treated me as though I were a personage of considerable consequence. He brought another official to his assistance. With painstaking care he imparted information. His intentions were good, and he did his best to please me, but he made two or three errors, which affected my enjoyment. These mistakes were natural and excusable, but I pardoned him, not because his errors were excusable, but because of his friendly interest and his magnificent courtesy and politeness.

"There were annoyances all along the line on account of over-crowding; but I stood them, and made no complaint, because everybody, from the conductors to the brakemen, seemed to have singled me out for especial courtesy, while, as a matter of fact, the other passengers were treated as well as I was."

"How did you like the B. & C. Railroad?" inquired the chairman.

"It gave me the best accommodations," I replied. "The equipment was perfect, its trains were on time; in fact, I enjoyed luxuries equal to the best hotels. But," I added, "I would not go over that road again unless I had to."

"Why?" inquired the chairman in amazement.

"Because," I answered, "several of its officials were post-graduates of the College of Extreme Hoggishness. As a gentleman I entered their office that I might obtain information and sleeping-car accommodations. I

was treated with every discourtesy, even bordering upon insult. An inquiry showed that this lack of courtesy was almost universal."

Summing up, I claimed that courtesy was one of the business and railroad assets; that the traveler, or everybody else, would stand any unintentional annoyances if he received good wholesome courtesy; that he disliked doing business with a man who was technically all right, but who lacked good-heartedness and whose speech and manner were as automatic and as hollow as the tones of a cracked talking machine.

The chairman sat in silence for several minutes. Then, extending his hand, he took mine with a fervent grasp.

"My friend," he said, "you have expressed a great business-getting and business-holding truth. Courtesy, on the part of a railroad official, as well as upon that of all business-getters, is, I believe, vitally essential. Will you exchange cards with me?"

I handed him my card and received his in return. When I had glanced at it, he smiled and said:

"You did n't know that you had been talking with the general passenger agent of the discourteous road, but I believe that you told the truth, and I thank you for it. When I get back to my office, I shall stand in the middle of it and read the riot act, and there will be changes, and mighty quick ones, too."

In a certain city there are two vaudeville houses, one with a maximum charge of a dollar and the other of

fifty cents. The grade of performance is practically the same, and often the lower-priced house presents a better bill. The dollar-house has become an institution, and there is seldom a vacant seat in its auditorium. The fifty-cent house has changed hands several times, and frequently the actors play to fifty per cent of empty benches.

When you enter one of the houses you immediately begin to breathe and feel the atmosphere of politeness, good-will, and courtesy. Every one, from the ticket-seller to the ticket-taker, from the usher to the water-boy, treats you as though you were an honored guest. In the other house you are waited upon by automatons.

Here are two institutions practically alike, except that one carries a complete assortment of courtesy and the other presents its goods without trimmings.

The house of courtesy has made a fortune. The house without it has had a checkered career.

The foregoing examples apply to salesmanship as well as to the running of railroads and theaters.

Buying is serious business. It means an actual outlay on the part of the buyer. He must give up his money, and there may be a risk in the transaction. Therefore, it must be made as easy for him as possible, and everything which contributes in this direction facilitates a sale.

Perhaps it may be necessary for the salesman to assume politeness and courtesy, to exercise them when he does not feel them. This is not hypocrisy, and there

is neither business nor moral objection to it. If it be hypocrisy and morally wrong, then it is wicked to veneer the piano-case, or to varnish the outside of furniture, or to have the face of wall paper look better than the other side of it.

Courtesy and politeness may be called the sunshine of trade. Sunshine is much deeper than it appears to be. By touching the outside, it warms the inside also.

True, deep-felt courtesy and politeness may be impossible, unless they are reciprocated, and the buyer may not always reciprocate. He may be erratic and morose, even to the disagreeable point. In this case, the salesman may have to force himself to be courteous, but he should do it anyway. It is a part of his stock in trade. The buyer wants it, expects it, and demands it.

When it is difficult to be courteous, the salesman should school himself to it, that he may realize that the giving of it is a part and parcel of his business, as much as are other requirements. If he is not naturally courteous, he must learn to be.

Over-politeness and simpering courtesy are detrimental. Even the childish woman does not want to be gushed over, and any attempt to do it will result in failure. But clean-cut politeness and cordiality, properly regulated and well presented, are definite and positive assets, and they must be used if one would sell goods.

It is never difficult to give them if one is naturally genial and when they are appreciated or reciprocated;

but it is not easy to use them before a snarling, disagreeable, and unreasonable customer.

It is not easy to sell goods. It is not easy to do business. It is not easy to do anything worth doing. But so long as they remain a part of selling, they must be used, and used judiciously, if one would hope to rise above the ordinary.

If you are not naturally courteous, learn to be. Learn it as you would any other science of business.

Too many salesmen simply *wait* upon customers in an indifferent and negative way, antagonize them instead of pleasing them. This attitude, — this lack of courtesy, — drives the customers to another store or keeps them from making large purchases.

The courteous salesman is a marked man. He makes friends in the store and out of it, and this one thing alone lifts him above his fellows, and he will be promoted more rapidly than will a better salesman who is morose, indifferent, and who lacks the essential of business courtesy.

STICK-TO-IT-IVENESS

On the distant horizon of fading memory I think I see the old red school-house. As a matter of fact, this particular school-house was painted white and yellow with blue trimmings, but popular tradition says it was red, and red it shall be.

I see the typical old-fashioned school committee-man, who never wore a coat save on Sunday and school visitation days, when he took out his one boiled shirt with paper cuffs and collar, collated them, and after he had shined his shoes with a rag, started, cane in hand, for the one-room house of learning.

I recall many of these addresses. They were all alike, and seemed to have been written with the same pencil on the same sheet. They began in the usual way. Two great big pieces of advice always appeared: first, reference to our friend the rolling stone, the fellow who never seemed able to attach himself to any moss; and, secondly, he would say: "Boys, stick to yer jobs. Keep at it. Don't think of nothin' else, and jest work for all yer worth, and every one of yer may be Presidents."

Now I am not taking exceptions to this old-time advice, because upon that meat were fed the men of mark of to-day; and positiveness of statement, whether

it be fully right or altogether wrong, seems to count in the rounding-up of effectiveness.

Some folks have to be told what to do, and the teller of the past found it necessary to give little quarter. But nowadays we are supposed to think out our problems, and the fellow who cannot do it for himself goes to the wall and stays there. Facts are facts, even if they outrage popular tradition and bore holes in our favorite adages.

Let us return to our rolling stone. It is not true that every man of change is predestined to failure. There are thousands of instances of men of constant change, who have tackled many jobs and who are financial successes. Therefore, it is wrong to place the changeable man in a world of utter darkness, and to claim that he can never see the rising of the sun of success.

Yet it is nevertheless a fact that there is absolutely no evidence to prove that the rolling stone would not have been better off if he had given up his rolling and remained in one place and stuck to one kind of work.

It is also a fact that a large proportion of successful men have made comparatively few changes in their business life. They may not have remained with the same firm that they started in with, but they did not make a material change from the kind of business they began with. If their initial position was in a shoe store, they remained in the shoe business. If they took up engineering, they did not travel far away from mechanical headquarters. They chose, wisely or unwisely, the

kind of work they would do and stuck to it, subject to occasional change of base, but not often to change of vocation.

Probably half of us start wrong, that is, we do not choose the line we are best fitted for, largely because we make little effort to diagnose the business future. We take the first job which presents itself. If we are adapted to the business, we succeed; but if we are better fitted for some other line, our top notch of possible success is never reached.

Would I advise the man who has started wrong to make a change of business base, even after he had remained a long time in his chosen vocation?

Yes, if he is sure that he is on the wrong track and can afford to make the change.

Sometimes one cannot change from the wrong road into the right one. He is too old, carries too many responsibilities, and must remain where he is, accomplishing little, yet all the time knowing that he started on the wrong road and is still following it.

But if one has started wrong, and knows it, he should correct the mistake at the earliest opportunity, provided he can do so without undue sacrifice.

Upon general principles, where we are is the best place for us to be, unless we are sure it is not; and we cannot be sure that we are in the wrong place if the only evidence we have is our bigotry or unsupported opinion. If we are headed wrong, somebody besides ourselves knows it.

Stick-to-it-iveness is a great business asset. Without it the chances of making good are materially reduced. Practically all of the men of successful change made the moves they did with well thought out reason. They did not go from one thing to another until they had weighed each side and had an intelligent reason for making the change.

All of us do not have the same opportunity, and a change, or several changes, may be advisable for one man, while another has no excuse for not sticking to his job.

Mere dissatisfaction with your position should not be taken as good evidence, or exclusive evidence, in favor of leaving it.

Perhaps you are naturally dissatisfied and easily discouraged.

You know the outs of your present position, and know little about the disadvantages of the one you are seeking. The future, unknown to you, appears brighter, simply because you have not seen the dark side of it. Every position has its "outs," and some vocations have many of them. Unless you are sure that you are in the wrong place, and those who know you agree with you, you have no right to seriously consider making a change.

When in doubt, make no move at all. Stay where you are, and stick to your job, unless you and fair-minded friends can discover tangible and material reasons for advocating a change.

Let us suppose, for example, that you are connected with an old established concern, too conservative, perhaps, to suit you, a house which is doing business somewhat opposed to modern methods. You do not receive rapid promotion. You are dissatisfied. But, perhaps, you are a natural fault-finder, a knocker, and a kicker.

You know, or think you know, that another concern is more progressive and appears to offer better opportunity. Would I advise you to make a change? That depends upon circumstances. Would another house give you an equally good position? Would the newness of your work, and the change of environment, operate against you? Would you not be better off with the old conservative concern you are with if you exerted yourself to the utmost? If you enter this new and progressive house, will you not find yourself under the strain of greater competition? How will your ability compare with that of the hustlers and pushers you will have to compete with?

Upon general principles, stay where you are, and stay anyway, unless you are sure that a change is advisable or necessary. Thousands of successful business men began as office boys with the concerns which they are now commanding. They have business records to be proud of.

True, their experience may be more limited than that of the men who have been connected with several firms, but there is an advantage in remaining where you are

and of moving from the bottom to the top within the same environment. Opinions differ, and success has been meted out to both. But a change of business base without reason tends to failure. The longer one remains in a place, the better off he may be, provided he is offered good opportunity.

It is unsafe to follow the advice and action of the great generals of industry or of men of extraordinary mark. They are geniuses. They can succeed at anything and make money anywhere. Throw them into the sea of disaster, and they will float ashore and market the sea-weed that clings to their feet.

Until you become a great genius, it is safer for you not to wander very far from the middle of the road, and to study the experiences of men of ordinary success, and not to be guided by those of great exceptions.

The majority of successful men stuck to their jobs until they were forced out of them by unavoidable pressure, or had positive evidence that they were occupying positions of failure. But none of them changed on account of purely personal dissatisfaction. They either stayed where they were or moved for reason.

The majority of this majority never learned more than one kind of business, and they stuck to that business and mastered it.

Nothing sticks to the man who does not stick.

ORIGINALITY IN SELLING

I APPROACH this subject with fear and trembling, because, however much I may strive to make myself plain, it is possible, and, perhaps, probable, that I shall be misunderstood by some of my readers. If a misunderstanding occurs, it is likely to be confined to an assumed impression that I do not give originality and invention the positions they deserve in the business world.

Let me say, therefore, at the start, that I do not depreciate the quality and intrinsicality of good and sensible originality, for no man ever makes more than small success at anything, from selling goods to doctoring a patient, who does not do something somewhat different from others. The man without originality is merely an automaton, — a machine, — and the little success he makes is purely automatic. He resembles a human being only in outward appearance.

Things seem to move in cycles or in epochs. For a number of years conventionality held almost almighty sway, and most folks did as others did before them, looking aghast at the man who dared to travel beyond the edge of the road of convention.

Naturally, reaction set in, and man attempted to jump beyond the boundaries of caution and sense; and originality, or what masqueraded under that name,

became almost epidemic. It seemed as though every one was trying to be different from all others.

The simplicity of art twisted itself into the grotesque. Non-understandable books flooded the country. Advertising became yellow. Experts rose up as in a night and offered their services to business men, guaranteeing to do something different, this doing differently being paraded as their only asset.

Conditions are changing again, and we are getting back to simplicity, not to the conventionality of simplicity, but to real simplicity.

Yet over-originality and the erratic are still altogether too prevalent. In themselves they have little or no commercial or selling value. To be different from others may be to be inferior to others. An overstock of forced individuality, or of hot-house-grown personality, will operate against the salesman. So long as the world is partly clothed in conventional garments, it will refuse to accept surprising innovations with alacrity, and no man of business can travel with safety entirely outside the road of convention.

Our business assets are weighed in the scale of custom, and what we do, however good it may be, is of little value commercially unless it is recognized and acceptable to those we do business with.

The over-original salesman, scintillating with brightness, may not be as successful as one who combines conventionality with his originality, using enough of each to better impress the customer.

The smart salesman is seldom a good salesman, for smartness can contribute little more than transient result.

Buying is serious business, and any attempt at flippant originality, or originality above the comprehension of the customer, works against a sale.

Originality has a selling value only when it is appreciated by the buyer. If it is so bright that it dazzles him, so high up that he cannot reach it, it is not worth half as much as is well-balanced conventionality.

While originality should be cultivated, and while it has a great commercial value, it should be safeguarded with caution and distributed with judgment.

When in doubt, do not be original. Be matter of fact and exact always, and simple too. Display your originality as a sort of side affair, as additional sunshine, but do not shed it where it is not wanted, and be sure that it is wanted before you shed it.

Do not try to be smart. Do not attempt to be peculiar. Do not be radically different from others unless you are in perfect control of these attributes and know how to distribute them. There is safety in the middle of the road. There is danger at the sides, and there is chance for disaster beyond the boundary line.

The great salesman, like the great business man, wins by taking reasonable chances, but it is not safe for you to copy him in entirety. He has succeeded by the exercise of his enormous ability and remarkable personality. He is a genius. To him license is given.

Until you become truly great, you had better pat-

tern after those in the middle of the ranks, for they have followed accepted principles and have been reasonably sure of each step before their feet struck the ground. Study their methods and work alongside of them if you can. After you have learned the rudiments from them, you have a right to experiment, to bring your originality and personality to the front, to take chances, if need be; but be a good salesman along regular lines first and a shining star afterwards.

One great mistake made by young salesmen and others is to pattern themselves after some great genius, some man of remarkable mark. They would begin where he left off. Because he succeeded by doing certain things, they would do the same.

The experienced captain may sometimes steer without a chart, and he may diagnose the weather without a barometer, because he is both a chart and a barometer, and need not always go outside himself for direction; but the fellow underneath, however proficient he may think he is, had better consult the conventional chart and the automatic barometer.

No man ever reached greatness in salesmanship or anything else at a bound. He has no right to consider himself competent to act as a genius until he becomes one.

Respect fundamental principles, and do not entirely ignore conventional and acceptable rules and regulations until you have mastered them and know how to straddle a comet without falling off.

ADVISING THE CUSTOMER

Some advice is cheap, and much worse than none at all; and some people are so ignorant, arrogant, and self-opinionated that they lack the ability to discriminate and will not tolerate the semblance of a suggestion.

There are others who are afraid to take advice because they have played with advice-taking, and have lost.

These personal experiences have done much towards convincing some folks that advice is worth very little, and that the outsider cannot furnish profitable counsel.

But whatever may be said about it, and whatever one's personal experiences may have been, advice is a marketable commodity, and no sensible person will object to receiving suggestions from any one who is supposed to be familiar in the premises.

The retail salesman is supposed to know more about his goods, their styles and wearing qualities, than is the customer in front of him. He is in touch with the goods, sees more of them than is possible for the customer to see; and, if he is at all intelligent and even moderately interested in his business, he has information which no customer is likely to possess.

The traveling man may not know any more about his goods than does the buyer, because both are experienced,

yet the salesman sees his wares from a different viewpoint, and, as he is moving from place to place, he should know some things about selling conditions that the buyer may not be as familiar with.

The good traveling salesman is a sort of cyclopedia of his business. He cannot help gathering information, and what he has learned, or has come in contact with, may be of considerable value to the retail merchant or buyer.

The salesman is in a position to give advice, or he should be. If he does not know enough to intelligently advise the customer, he had better not attempt to sell goods.

The customer in front of the counter will gladly accept advice and suggestions from the salesman, if the salesman knows his business and the advice given is of interest to him, and if it is presented in a modest, gentlemanly, and courteous way. No customer worth having will resent good advice well given. In fact, most customers expect it, and some of them demand it.

The traveling man has, perhaps, a better opportunity, because he comes in contact with trade conditions all over his territory, and then he meets his customer in more of a social way; but the counter-man will find plenty of opportunity, if he makes an effort to get it.

Many successful salesmen have become the confidential advisers of their customers, who depend upon them, because experience has proven that the advice given is of value. The salesmen, who can give honest

and profitable advice and present it in a proper manner, will sell more goods and hold more customers than will he who attends strictly to selling and to nothing else.

All of us, including customers, are dependent upon others, need others' ideas, especially if they come from experience. The salesman has this experience, because he meets so many people. Therefore, he is logically in a position to advise and suggest. The better posted he is, the more valuable is his advice. If he knows his goods, and the use of them, he is in a position to be of great benefit to his customer.

The manner of giving advice is as important as the intrinsic value of the advice itself. Advice hurled at a customer, or given in an arbitrary way, irritates him and turns him against the salesman, and he will not accept it even though it be good. The salesman must study how to present advice and suggestions, so that they will be received in the spirit they are given. They will not be well received unless they are of benefit to the receiver.

Of course, the salesman's main object is to sell. The customer knows this, but this need not make the advice less valuable or less appreciated.

In giving advice, always tell the truth, for any discrepancy on your part will react against you and the firm you work for.

If the customer buys something wholly on account of the advice given him by the salesman, and loses money, the salesman is in a peculiar position, and

may have lost the customer. If, on the other hand, the advice has been profitable, the salesman has obtained a business friendship which will materially aid in holding and increasing his trade.

A proportion of retail buyers purchase through ignorance goods which will not be satisfactory to them. They do not know how to make selections. They do not realize that what pleases them at first sight may have no lasting quality. Although it is their own fault, they are likely to condemn the salesman who allowed them to purchase what they asked for, and not to think well of the store they traded with. They are disappointed, and they want to throw the blame upon somebody else.

The man behind the counter should not occupy an arbitrary position. He must not force the customer to go one way or the other, but if he knows the customer is making a mistake which is sure to result in dissatisfaction, he can, if he be a good salesman, present the case quietly and politely, and in such a way that the customer will really follow his advice and yet think that he is making the change of his own volition.

Many a buyer desires to purchase goods in too large a quantity, or goods which are not likely to sell. The salesman knows this, and he can make a larger sale if he says nothing. Generally, it pays to discuss the matter with the buyer, to frankly advise him not to purchase a certain line or to make his order larger or smaller, the reasons always to be given. This is friendly

advice as well as mighty good business. The customer appreciates it, particularly if experience proves to him that the salesman is right.

There is no reason why all trading should be cold-blooded business. A little, at least, of the better part of human nature may be given a chance to show itself. There is no reason why the average sale should not be a mutual affair, of equal benefit to both, nor is there any reason why good-will should not be a part of the negotiation.

But be careful. Do not give advice unless you are reasonably sure that it is good, and that it will benefit the receiver. Of course, you cannot be positive about this. If you wait to be absolutely sure, you may spend the rest of your life in waiting. Just be reasonably sure that you are right, then present it to your customer as you would to a friend as an act of good-will, and be so friendly about it and so cordial that it will be received in good part and appreciated.

Usually it is better to suggest, or to appear to do so, than to formally advise, for a suggestion is not likely to antagonize, while arbitrary or positive advice may not be always well received. Here is where experience comes in. If you have good judgment, you will soon learn how to do it. If you have not, you will have to remain an automatic salesman, — a sort of slot-machine, and nothing more.

BEING AFRAID OF YOURSELF

I HAVE attempted to bring out the selling value of confidence under the chapter heading of "Self-Confidence," but a few words about the opposites of it, — fear and abnormal reticence, — may not be out of place.

It is a self-evident fact that nobody ever succeeded in doing anything above the ordinary who was continuously afraid of himself, who always looked for failure, or who had not proper self-confidence.

It has been said that one of our greatest generals won his battles because he was always sure of victory and did not seem to know when he was beaten. But I do not feel like going so far as to unqualifyingly commend the man who does not know when he is down, for when one is certain that he is vanquished, real bravery justifies retreat. Only the fool kicks against the pricks that he cannot remove from his path.

But the man who is continuously afraid of himself, and is forever looking for failure, usually finds it. While, on the other hand, he who possesses proper bravery, and is continually looking for success, expecting to find it, may not always reach it, but he is more likely to.

Some people have a shrinking disposition. They are afraid of the dark, and tremble in the twilight. They cannot seem to hold themselves together, to protect

themselves against obstacles. They expose their vulnerable parts, and invite the thrust of the sword.

Some of this fear is pre-natal and natural and cannot be wholly overcome, but most of it is primarily due to pure and simple laziness, to an unwillingness to stand up, to fight hard and fair whenever occasion requires.

Let me give a word of caution to the man who thinks he is brave, and who may not be. The continuous display of independence is not bravery. Looking for trouble is the act of the fool, not of the man who is truly courageous. Bullying is really cowardice. To retreat, when all hope ahead is gone, takes a higher grade of courage than to stand like a rat in the corner and fight with no prospect of winning.

Truly brave men, in business and in every other walk of life, are those who are not afraid to meet opposition, competition, and obstacle, and who are strong in their self-respect; but who do not make a display of their bravery, and who consider retreat at the right time more honorable than the continuation of a strife which is sure to lead to defeat.

Fight when you must. Stand your ground when there is something to stand on. Run with all your speed when the enemy is solid against you and your firing line is broken to a man. Somewhere else you can set up a fortification, which may stand some chance of resistance. But do not make a specialty of running away. Put up and maintain a bold front when there is a fair fighting chance of victory.

There is no reason why you should be afraid of yourself. Remember that. Never forget it. What is there in yourself to be afraid of? Nor is there any reason why you should be afraid of your goods, if they are marketable. Nor is there any possible reason why you should be afraid of the customer. He is not dangerous. He cannot hurt you. You have a recognized right to address him. Exercise that right. Salesmanship is a part of business. Go in and win if you can. To be afraid is to lose.

YOUR COMPETITORS

Notwithstanding the tendency towards monopoly and the rapid growth of combinations, comparatively few selling houses are in exclusive command of any one commodity. Competition has not been stifled, except in spots, and few buyers are obliged to patronize any one house to the exclusion of others.

The natural trend of business has produced standard qualities, or, rather, many grades of standard qualities, and about everything is in duplicate. The salesman is likely to meet competition on every side, and generally his competitor is selling just as good goods and at the same terms.

There exists a selling policy, employed by some salesmen, of attacking the competitor at every opportunity and of strenuously depreciating the goods he carries. Practically all level-headed, far-seeing business men of judgment decry the practice of this policy and instruct their salesmen to leave the competitor severely alone, unless forced to express an opinion, and, even then, they favor speaking well of the competitor and of the goods he carries.

Nothing disgusts the average buyer more than knocking a competitor. It almost invariably shows weakness on the part of the salesman, and creates a suspicion that

the competitor and his goods are superior to the one who speaks against them and the goods he carries.

Running down the competitor is far more likely to do him good, and to advertise him, than it is the salesman who is so foolish and unbusiness-like as for a moment to imagine that talking against the competitor can have other than boomerangic effect.

Either speak well of your competitor and what he sells, or say nothing about him, except under very exceptional circumstances.

In selling goods it is better to be an affirmative man than one of negative character. Negatives have little selling value. Customers prefer to listen to positive statements, all right from the shoulder of truth, and the more affirmative they are the better they like them. Talking against the "other fellow" is of negative quality, and for that alone it is out of place in selling, to say nothing about the bad policy of talking against anybody in business.

Mind your own business, and let the other man attend to his business, is a mighty good selling policy.

IRRITABILITY IN SELLING

The perfectly balanced, equipoised, always calm, and deliberate individual does not exist, never has lived, and never will, until the inauguration of Utopian days.

Extravagant living and strenuous business-doing, coupled with frequent family troubles and friction, make it impossible for any one to be other than irritable at times, and few of us, probably none of us, can always completely control it, and every one will show it now and then, if not more frequently.

It is both useless and absurd to demand perpetual calmness of any one, or to advise him to keep his irritability completely within himself. Imperfect human nature and conditions are opposed to anything like a perfect state.

It has been said that the strongest personalities, the brains of superlative quality, carry the greater volume of irritability; and that ordinary people, traveling conventional paths, show a more equitable balance. It does not matter whether this be true or not. Certainly, it should not be cultivated as an evidence of genius.

The great man, with shabby coat and frayed trousers and with long and unkempt hair, may accomplish much in spite of his untidiness; but his personal carelessness is not a part of his work. It handicaps, not

aids, his progress. The irritable genius may succeed, because he may have sufficient power to override his misfortune.

Because the greater part of irritability has its source in the immaterial or in the imagination, it can be largely overcome or regulated to a considerable extent, unless one is suffering from chronic neurasthenia. The life of the salesman is one of constant friction. The customer is often unreasonable and irritable. Because he is the buyer, he may claim the right to do and act as he pleases. He may cast his spleen or irritability upon the salesman, unloading it upon those he comes in contact with, and especially upon those who make a request of him.

It is useless for the salesman to criticise the customer, to question whether or not he has a right to be irritable, so long as the buyer will do what he wants to and will not allow any one to dictate his policy.

So long as selling requires the exercise of a request, and so long as the seller is usually more anxious to sell than is the buyer to buy, the salesman will be obliged to cheerfully put up with irritability upon the part of the customer, whenever he can do so without loss of self-respect.

It is possible for the irritable buyer, even in his unhappiest moods, to profitably buy for his house; but it is utterly impossible for the irritable salesman to present goods and irritability at the same time and sell the former.

So long as you are a salesman, you will have daily opportunity to be irritable, and perhaps you will meet with hourly disappointment. Every time you fail to make a sale you are temporarily disappointed, perhaps disconcerted, and disappointment breeds irritability, and this irritability, if sustained or shown, cannot do other than interfere with your selling effectiveness.

The retail salesman is especially subject to irritation, for the consuming customer, the one who buys at the store, is not likely to know goods and their values, or just what he wants or must have; while the buyer of goods to be sold again is a better judge of qualities. He meets, therefore, more unreasonableness, and the display of a greater lack of business principles, than come into the every-day work of the wholesale seller. This unreasonableness, and often unfairness, will continue, and there appears to be no way to get rid of it. But if one accepts conditions as does the mariner, who is always prepared for a storm, he will not be so much affected.

Whatever may be the degree of your irritability, and however difficult or easy it may be to irritate you, you must control or regulate it while you are before your customer, or you will miserably fail as a salesman.

In the act of selling it is absolutely necessary for you to show good nature and courtesy, no matter what your inside feelings may be. If you cannot control your irritability for a time, keep away from your customer, if it is possible for you to do so, and do not go

back to him until you are in control of yourself. You may have a thousand excuses for being morose and discouraged, and all of them may be good, but as the customer is not interested in your personal welfare, you have no right to expect his sympathy or regard, unless he is a personal friend. You present yourself to him with a request that he buy something of you. You take the initiative, not he. He is not on sale, you are. As you want his money more than he wants to give it to you, he is your superior for the time being. Therefore you must meet him in a way that is satisfactory to him.

I have the deepest sympathy for men in trouble, for men with physical or other ailments, which keep them constantly on edge. They are indeed worthy of all compassion. But business is often cruel. Little of the human heart comes into it. It is a hard game to play. Its action does not seem to give much room for the nicer things of life. It is give and take, and take and give.

All of us, both buyers and sellers, are subjected to the influences of every kind of environment. It would seem that expert buyers, men who do nothing else, would buy with their brains without the intervention of their feelings, and that it would make very little difference whether the sun shone or it rained. As a matter of fact, from ten to fifty per cent more goods are sold on a pleasant day than are sold when the skies are dark.

I am not referring to the retail business, because folks naturally stay in when it rains, but to the purchases made by professional buyers. Thousands of expert salesmen never call upon the buyer when the weather is unpleasant, unless conditions are urgent.

Greater and better sales are made under favorable environment, and the salesman is one of the creators of it. It is as necessary that he be sunny as it is that the day be bright.

If goods cannot be rapidly sold on a stormy day, how can the salesman expect to succeed with a cloudy face and an irritable manner?

Be considerate of the customer. He may be in a more difficult position than you are. At times he is puzzled and uncertain. If you put yourself in his place, perhaps you would show more irritability and indecision.

Irritability felt interferes with good salesmanship; irritability shown is fatal to good salesmanship.

PERSONAL HABITS

Perhaps you have a legal right to do as you please, provided you do not interfere with anybody else; but I do not see how you can do as you please, if what you please to do is wrong, without affecting somebody besides yourself. Therefore, if you are dissipated, or have bad habits, you have no legal right, or any other right, to do as you please, or as you have been doing, for you are outraging the best of public sentiment and are antagonizing accepted business principles.

I am aware that some forms of dissipation do not seem to interfere with business-doing, for some men of bad habits make money, and some drunkards keep their financial heads above water. But dissipation contributes to failure, and usually gets the better of the man who practices it.

As a salesman, you are under three definite laws: the law of right, the law of your own self-respect, and the law which says you shall be faithful to the man you work for and do nothing to discredit him.

The first is the most important of all, for from it spring all other laws and rules. It is the law of principle, and principle is the highest of all.

The law of your own self-respect is not of minor importance. The drunkard cannot have it. The man

of bad habits, although the practice of them may bring him transient pleasure, never respects himself, and this lack of self-respect permeates his entire system and puts a brake upon his progress.

To sustain bad habits, when you are in the employ of another, if these acts interfere with your effectiveness or with his, is as dishonest as it is to steal money. You are misrepresenting your employer and are a disgrace to the trade you are in. You cannot honorably accept your salary, even if you are able to sell goods successfully. You are a personal and business disgrace, a consummate fool, a sort of perpetual suicide, wronging yourself and everybody you come in contact with.

Your personal habits are a part of your business structure. From a business point of view alone, leaving the moral side of it out altogether, you have no right to have any habits which will interfere with your business progress, and no form of dissipation can possibly be to your benefit, and it is absolutely sure to work to your detriment.

Bad habits of every kind undermine health, destroy self-respect, and handicap effectiveness.

Wholesome diversion does not require any form of dissipation for its realization. The men who enjoy themselves to the uttermost, and who are best fitted to fight the business battles, are those who are ever careful of body and mind and who refuse to have anything to do with anything which interferes with business or social progress or with the pulling down of character.

The good fellow, who is respected, and who sells the most goods, does not do it with the aid of any form of dissipation. The dissipated man is not respected even by those who share his illegitimate liberality. Even bad men respect and honor the salesman of sterling character. They are distrustful of the fellow who does not retain his self-respect. A drink never consummated a sale that would not have resulted without it. You never offend a man by not asking him to share your dissipation.

Good personal habits are business assets and contribute largely to selling success. With bad habits you may succeed to some extent, but the flush of success is never yours.

TAKING AN INTEREST IN YOUR WORK

It is a positive fact, admitting of no qualification whatsoever, that no high grade of achievement is possible unless one takes an active, a thorough, and a strenuous interest in his work.

There is little fun, and practically nothing worth while, in playing, unless one goes at it with his whole heart, with a definite object, and with the determination to have a mighty good time.

Indifference, either in play or in duty-doing, is the microbe that eats the life out of everything it comes in contact with. No matter how menial our work may be, how disagreeable or how discouraging, we accomplish little in the present, and practically nothing in the future, unless we give it undivided interest for the time being, at least.

Perhaps a small amount of merely mechanical work, assuming that there is anything solely mechanical, can be done with indifference; but even this work of pure detail lacks finish unless interest is back of the hand which does it.

The most successful men, whether sellers of goods or not, began at the bottom, and they were as much interested at the start as they were at the finish. Whatever they did, they did with their might. The boy who

does not take an absorbing interest in the mailing of letters or the sticking on of postage stamps, or makes drudgery of it, or does not consider it a means to a better end, will probably never succeed, and surely will make nothing of himself if his attitude towards his work does not undergo a change.

Everything worth doing is worth doing with a will, and is, for the time being, a vital part of life, and there is nothing of consequence which should not carry interest in the doing of it.

If you do not like your work, either learn to like it or get something else to do; but make every effort to like it before you give it up. It must not be considered drudgery, no matter how disagreeable it may be to you. Even the least of things are stepping-stones to better things.

Few of us are doing exactly what we want to do. There are objections and obstacles all along the line of every kind of endeavor, and we may like one thing better than another, yet be obliged to do that which we like to do the least. But for all that, we can bring ourselves to be interested in the most menial labor, and to throw our heart and energy into the acts, which, for the time being, are parts of our work and lead on to better things. We can often learn to like what we have disliked by forcing ourselves to take an interest in it.

No salesman ever amounted to anything who did not have and maintain a decided interest in his work,

who was not interested in the goods he sold, and who did not feel a personal interest in the house he worked for.

Undoubtedly it is difficult at times to respect one's employer, and the methods of some particular house may not appeal to the employee; but, so long as he retains that position, he must give to it the best there is in him and look forward to a change for the better.

Remember that where you are is likely to be the best place for you, and you should feel that way unless you have positive reasons for not doing so. Particularly should you be interested in the house you work for, and feel as though you were a member of the firm, that you are a part of a mutual interest. Unless you maintain this attitude, you will be of little use to yourself or to your employer. Your interests should be interlocked, unless there is something the matter with you or with him.

Be sure that you are right before you criticise the man you work for. The fact that he is in command of the business may be considered as evidence that he is your superior for the time being. At any rate, you are commercially his inferior, and you never will be his superior unless you respect yourself sufficiently to respect your work.

Before deciding that your house offers you little or no opportunity, go into executive session with yourself, analyze yourself, watch yourself, and make sure that the bulk of the trouble is not in you. You are really

working for yourself, and you should be right, whatever may be the condition of the house you are with; and you cannot be right if you are not doing your best with heart and hand, even under real or imaginary handicaps.

If you are positive that the firm is to blame, — and do not allow your unsupported opinion to have weight, — get out. But be sure of your ground before you make the move.

Be interested, not only in the firm you work for, but in your associates. Get in contact with them. Learn of them, and give something in return. Do not place yourself upon a level above others unless you are sure that you are superior to them. If you are, it may be better to keep it to yourself so far as talking it or showing it is concerned.

Without this broad interest in your work, you will be a rattler of business, a disturbing element which only makes a noise.

If you cannot obtain this interest, if you continue to be dissatisfied, and are unable to locate the trouble after the most strenuous effort, salesmanship is undoubtedly not in your line, and I would advise you to go on the farm if I thought you would make a success of farming. You are on a side track that runs into a bumper or a sand bank. You are not getting anywhere. Get back on to the main line of interest.

TREATING THE CUSTOMER

Some folks, outside of the selling craft, seem to be laboring under the delusion that universal treating on the part of the salesman is necessary to success on the road.

Although the doing of courtesy, with more or less of what is known as treating, is quite common, it is not practiced by every salesman, nor is it done continuously by those who employ it. Some very proficient men stick strictly to the yea-yea and nay-nay of business-doing, and neither give nor receive a favor.

Yet there is not, and cannot be, any moral or business objection to so-called treating, if it be in the form of a courtesy or a return favor.

Life is hard enough, anyway, and business life too strenuous to forbid the introduction of small courtesies and the exchange of little things which smooth the business way and which add much to commercial as well as to general good-fellowship.

But treating should never suggest bribery. If it does, it is fatal to continuous success. So long as it remains a courtesy, an act of good-will, it has commercial value.

But the salesman should never treat the customer, even to a cigar, at the first interview. Let him come to business and stay at business. But after the prelim-

inary skirmish there is no objection to his handing the customer a cigar, or offering to do a minor favor, if he is reasonably sure that it will be considered as a simple act of business good-will, and will not be taken as a bribe.

Let us suppose, for example, that a salesman enters a place of business for the first time. He does not know the buyer. Nothing creates a worse impression than to immediately offer something like a cigar, which at the time is little else than a bribe; nor should he invite the buyer to dine with him until he is sufficiently acquainted with him to establish a sort of business friendship.

If the salesman is a baseball enthusiast, and he knows that the buyer is a fan, or if he enjoys any other sport or form of diversion, and thinks that the buyer is like-minded, then he may in perfect good taste invite the buyer to accompany him. He may take him to lunch or to the theater. He may even send him a box of cigars, if the buyer expresses satisfaction with the flavor of the one he handed him; but never at or near the initial interview.

The safest rule to follow is to do no treating until you know the buyer, and then to treat him as he would treat you, a sort of exchange of courtesy, it making little difference which one stands the expense.

But the offering of any courtesy which is forced, or appears to be, or is obviously done to buy the good-will of the buyer, is mighty poor business.

Of course, if one chooses to minutely analyze the fundamental elements of courtesy or of treating, he may discover that most of it is done in hope of a reward, and is, therefore, pure selfishness, and not a part of the better part of business-doing.

What if it is tainted with selfishness? What if it is a means to an end? If it accomplishes a result without injuring anybody, and, at the same time, makes trading pleasanter and easier to do, and helps to create and maintain business friendships which lead on to better sales, it should not be discarded.

No iron-clad rule can be laid down. No first-class buyer can be bribed, but the buying hours can be made pleasanter to him.

Simply treat him as you would a friend, and as a friend would treat you. To do more than that is bribery, to do less than that may be business foolishness.

INDEPENDENCE IN SELLING

The salesman with independence written all over his face and a chip on each shoulder is looking for trouble and is going to find it. So long as he maintains this attitude, he will remain far away from the boundary lines of success.

Nowadays, many of us think altogether too much about our independence, and the folks who have the least right to it appear to show the most of it.

This desire to be independent has become almost epidemic, a sort of international disease, deathly if chronic, and injurious if of a transient duration. Some of us forget that proper self-respect recognizes others as much as ourselves and that real civilized independence is as dependent as it is independent.

Individual man amounts to mighty little. As a part of a composite whole he is of almighty importance; but take him individually, by himself alone, he is no more than the smallest bubble on the biggest sea.

The more ignorant and arrogant the man, the more he talks about his independence and the more he demands what he refuses to give. He establishes his own methods and frames a self-made code of principles. He will do it his way or not at all. He considers himself a great universal IT. If any one opposes him, or acts

differently than he does, he either condemns him or pities him. He does not realize that pure independence grows out of dependence.

I believe in self-respect. The man without it is a little bit worse than nothing. But the man who prides himself on his independence, who proposes to sell goods his way without thinking of the customer's way, who believes that he is right and the customer wrong, who is opposed to the policy of the house he works for when it is an honest one, is unfit to meet any part of the business world, and, when he does meet it, he is beaten at every point. This sort of independence is false independence, not the genuine article, and the exercise of it is absolutely fatal to any kind of success in salesmanship.

The customer has as much or more rights than those possessed by the salesman. The salesman is asking the customer to buy something, and he is more anxious to consummate the trade than is the customer. The asking-man is always dependent upon the man addressed. This position does not mean a loss of self-respect, or anything which interferes with positiveness or with the maintenance of a good honest policy. But the independence which is purely personal, and which is founded only upon the person himself, is one of the greatest obstacles to business-doing.

The majority of poor salesmen object to the policy of the house they work for, object to discipline, object to being told anything, and are particularly opposed to being ordered. They feel that they are looked upon

as dependents, and in this they are right, because they are; but the trouble is that they do not accept this condition as they should, and they chafe under the necessary, and often kindly, harness.

While many a business house is weak in method and wrong in policy, the chances are that it is better conducted than it would be if it was managed by its employees.

Practically every manager of salesmen or maker of selling policy has sold goods on the road and in the store. He is not a novice or tender-foot. He is probably a past-master in salesmanship. He gained his present position because he had drilled in the ranks. His promotion was not that of accident. He has been placed at the head of the salesmen, because he deserves to occupy that position. Not only is he familiar with salesmanship, but he is a part of the policy of the business. The salesmen under him should look up to him, should believe in him and support him and his policies, except in exceptional cases.

Upon general principles, the man at the head deserves to be there or he would not be there, and upon the same general principles it may be said that the salesman under the sales-manager is not as proficient in policy-making and in management as is the man over him, although he may grow to be superior to his commander.

The best salesmen are those who do not chafe under discipline, who do not retaliate at the unreasonableness of the customer, who realize both their dependence and

their independence, and who recognize the rights of others, so long as the exercise of them does not insult their self-respect.

They are both dependent and independent, — dependent upon others, that they may learn of others and satisfy others, and independent so far as it is necessary to be for the exercise of their self-respect and well-earned judgment. They realize that their strength is not in their own individuality wholly, but in their ability to learn of others and to shape their lives, so that instead of being mere individuals, they represent in a composite way the best obtainable.

The independent man does not live.

Many of us are impressed with the majesty and dignity of the commander on the bridge. His face shows the wear and tear of sea, wind, and experience; his tread is positive; his words few and to the point. It is popularly supposed that he is in absolute command of the ship, not only of the vessel itself, but of the lives of all on board. He represents the superlative of independence and individual command. As a matter of fact, he is the best example of the composite. He reached his position step by step. As he stands upon the bridge, the personification of dignity, he is one of our best monuments of the dependence of independence. No man has worked harder to learn what others know, no man has experimented more than he has, no man is more willing to listen to the whispers of the wind and to let the gentle breeze warn him of the coming

storm. His eyes are seldom off the barometer or compass. He is a product of composite training, the representative of true independence.

Do not be afraid of not receiving the respect due you. Better find out whether or not you deserve any respect. If you are worth it, you are likely to get it some time.

Do not be jealous of yourself. You are having no worse a time, probably, than the experience of the thousands who are with you and above you. Our lives are much alike, so far as business goes. We have to go through a certain amount of training and stumble and fall a number of times. All this is discouraging, and we are prone to envy the fellow ahead, and to pull at the reins, forgetting that the driver may have had a harder time than we are having while between the shafts of labor.

SELF-CONFIDENCE IN SELLING

Better have too much self-confidence than too little of it. I say this advisedly and emphatically with a full appreciation of the injury which usually results from over-confidence and arrogance.

The man of extreme modesty, the reticent man, the man who approaches the customer in a cringing sort of way, will never consummate a sale worth while.

I despise arrogance; I have little respect for over-confidence; the conceited man is an abomination; and personally I have some admiration for the man of extreme modesty, particularly in these days when modesty has not become chronically prevalent.

To sell goods is an art by itself, and aggressive work is necessary. The salesman must take the initiative. In the battle he must fire the first shot; and, if his first shot misses fire, he is likely to suffer defeat.

Now confidence, even too much of it, seems to be a part of the battle of life, particularly that of business, and more particularly that of selling.

The customer, for the most part, makes it a point to assure the seller that he does not want to buy. He produces real or imaginary obstacles. He is, or pretends to be, opposed to buying. He is looking for a weak place in the salesman, and proposes to take

advantage of it if he finds it. Therefore, the salesman with little self-confidence is likely to fail.

Of course, the perfect salesman, if there be one, carries with him the right amount of self-confidence and modesty. But the perfect salesman does not exist, and, if he did, he would have a hard time fighting the imperfect customer.

The appearance of arrogance is fatal, and too much over-confidence results in failure; but a reasonable amount of self-confidence, even a little too much of it, is a part of successful salesmanship.

No one can sell goods if he approaches the customer with apparent discouragement written upon his face. The appearance of failure breeds failure.

Nobody likes to buy of any one who does not expect to sell. The salesman who thinks he is going to make a sale, or who acts as though he appeared to expect to sell the goods, who has confidence written on his face, stands double the chance of selling as compared with the man who meets his customer as though he were afraid of him, and who talks his goods as though he were sure he could not sell them.

The question naturally arises, how can I, as a salesman or a would-be salesman, obtain and carry self-confidence?

The best way to get it or to develop it is to be enthusiastic about your work, to respect the quality of your goods and the house you work for, and to honestly believe that what you have to offer actually benefits

the buyer. You should be proud of your work, proud of everything connected with it, and consider discouragement as a part of the discipline of business.

If you thoroughly respect your goods and your employer, if you are proud of your position, and if you feel that you have what the customer wants or ought to want, you will carry with you a certain amount of self-confidence; in fact, it will be well nigh impossible for you not to have it.

If you cannot cultivate this self-confidence, if you are going to remain afraid of the customer, if you cannot bring yourself to respect your work, and if you are always thinking of the discouraging side of it, I would advise you to give up trying to sell goods and obtain some other position if you can, preferably in some clerical line where what you do means a good deal more than the way you do it, — a position which does not bring you in contact with the active side of business.

Remember that in selling goods, and, in fact, in doing anything else, you are reckoned by what you are. If you have confidence in yourself and in your work, you show it and the customer sees it and feels it. If you have not, instinctively you are looked upon as a weakling, and the best of goods and intentions count for little.

The salesman is like the soldier on the firing line. If he cannot stand up under fire, he should not be allowed to handle a gun.

Thousands of men and women, competent to do good work in clerical or other lines, have been induced to become sellers of goods, and they make little or no success at it, although most of them manage to scrape together a living. They lack the essentials of salesmanship and particularly self-confidence. They are afraid of their customers, and they cannot seem to rid themselves of this fear. They should make the most heroic effort, and, if it fails, the quicker they get out of the selling ranks the better off they will be, for there is no opportunity for them beyond that of the lowest. If they cannot stand bravely in front of the customer and meet discouragement and rebuff with a smiling face, secure in the confidence of their ability to make a sale at one time or another, if the sale be possible, they have no right to pretend to practice salesmanship. Their place is elsewhere.

STUDYING OTHERS' METHODS

Outside of the practice of the concrete arts and clerical work, individuality plays an important part. In fact, without the exercise of personality, and doing things one's own way to some extent, more than ordinary achievement appears to be impossible.

This exercise of individuality is much in evidence in salesmanship. While there are fundamental principles of selling, which cannot be done away with impunity, the majority of successful salesmen, and even those hardly above the mediocre class, have some method of their own, approach people in a little different way than others do, and present arguments which represent self-thought-out ideas, even to a small degree.

I have already said, and most emphatically, that salesmanship cannot be taught as can bookkeeping, or chemistry, or mathematics, or other concrete arts or sciences, as it is not, and probably never will be, an exact art, teachable by textbook or arbitrary rule.

Nevertheless, salesmanship is not above instruction, but this teaching, if I may call it that, should come by suggestion, the studying of men and things, and by the exchange of experiences.

Even great ability can be developed into greater ability. The best of us can become better, know more, and achieve more.

Experience and contact with others are the best teachers of salesmanship. Much of salesmanship which may be learned comes from this experience and contact with others, and this is accomplished by studying others' methods and by using as much of them as one can profitably handle.

The practice of untrained personality, and the exclusive use of original methods, invite failure. Notwithstanding how great our personality may be, alone we are very imperfect, and by ourselves it is impossible for us to accomplish anything worth while.

Although we have methods of our own, or what appear to be, and although many of us possess strong personality, as a matter of fact, these methods and our personality came largely through others, or, rather, contact with others developed them. While large differences are noticeable, all of us have something in common, and most of our ideas are adopted.

Successful salesmen live and travel with salesmen, are active members of organizations of salesmen. They never lose an opportunity to discuss with others the experiences of selling. To the little they know they add the much that others know. They are students of the human nature of salesmanship. They are able to gather something from every one. Even the office boy can give them points.

They know how to adapt the methods of others to their own use. They absorb, and yet distribute at the same time. They take and they give.

Notwithstanding that there are many different methods of selling, they are not necessarily opposed to each other, and the hearing of any kind of experience, whether it be usable or not, adds materially to working knowledge.

Salesmen should get together, play profitable games of conversation, exchange experiences, even minor ones, talk about everything which pertains to selling.

In no other way can one become a successful salesman, for in no other way can he get beyond himself and use experiences and methods which have been proven to be profitable.

The competent salesman knows what he can use, and what he cannot use, to advantage. He knows about how much he can take from another, and what is worthless to him.

Never lose an opportunity to talk with salesmen. Go out of your way to meet them. Arrange to spend some evenings together. While on the train, congregate. Be friendly. If you are able to absorb, you are fit to distribute, and it will be an even exchange.

If you are behind the counter, watch the other salesmen. See how they do things. Whenever possible, visit other stores and study the methods prevailing.

One reason why the average traveling salesman is

more progressive than is the man behind the counter is because he comes more in contact with his craft, and has, perhaps, a better opportunity to exchange experiences and ideas.

But the inside salesman can do all this if he will. He can easily study the methods of the salesmen close by and those across the aisle. He has opportunity to visit other stores and to watch the salesmen there. He can meet salesmen in the evening. I would advise him to form an association of his kind, if there is not a good one near by, to hold weekly or monthly meetings, these gatherings to be open forums, with or without a light lunch. Something to eat, however, helps mightily. Much of what goes into the stomach comes out through the mind, and eating together brings people closer together.

Arrange to meet salesmen at your noon-day lunch — not all of the time, because too much of it is not good for you and you need outside association.

Do not be afraid to ask questions. Refusal to do so is not modesty or consideration for others, but *prima facie* evidence of your laziness and indifference. The man does not live who does not like to be questioned along his line. In this direction he is more willing to give than he is to receive. When we know a thing, we like to tell others about it. If you want to know anything, and you know of some one who has it, go and get it. He is standing on the front steps beckoning you to him. It is a good thing for

him to tell what he knows, and a good thing for you to hear him tell it.

Get together socially and in a business way. No matter how expert you are, you do not know it all. Only by experience and contact with other salesmen can you rise from the ranks. Then, this game of conversation, this swapping of experiences, is not hard work. It is really diversion. It is interesting, or should be made to be. You rest while you talk and listen.

The secretive person and the hermit have no right to live in the world of selling. Really, there is not any place on earth for them.

Get together, and keep getting together. Study others, and let others study you. Learn, not only how to understand others' methods, but how to adapt them to yourself; and, what is as important, learn by experience and by a study of yourself how to discriminate between the good methods of others which you can use and the equally good methods of others which, for some reason, you can never successfully practice.

As a rule, do not try to do as others do just as others do it. The very difference between us makes it impossible for any two of us to be exactly alike or to do the same thing exactly the same way. Men of success are composite. They use what they have and what they can honestly get from others. They are not dishonest, because they give as much as they take, and what they take from others is not anybody's loss.

They simply become a part of the great world of experience, taking and giving as they go along, never relying wholly upon themselves, but realizing that success in every direction depends upon interchange and reciprocity.

INDIVIDUALITY IN SELLING

THERE are several reasons why you should preserve your own and exclusive individuality, especially in salesmanship. The prime one is that you have not, and cannot have, any other individuality.

No two men were born alike. If this unprecedented accident should occur, they would not remain alike, for no two of us have duplicate experiences or can possibly live under exactly the same environment.

Nature does not permit duplication in minute exactness of anything either on the earth or under the earth. There are no two thumb marks alike among the billions of inhabitants of the world.

Because the individuality of each person must remain, and is subject to no fundamental change, and because we cannot possibly possess any except our own, it is obviously both foolish and unbusiness-like to attempt to be what we are not. To do so invites failure and results in discouragement and loss.

True, we may overcome many of our bad habits, regulate or get rid of our irritating mannerisms, train the harsh voice to resemble softness, appear to be pleasant when we feel the opposite, and curb or regulate a bad disposition.

All of the foregoing mentioned changes are possible,

and some of them are probable, notwithstanding that we cannot alter our basic individuality any more than we can grow hair against Nature's intention.

Many a man, who could have been a success in his own way, has approached failure in attempting to be somebody else. Our capacities are limited by Nature, and our natural ability cannot be increased. There is just so much in each one of us, no more and no less. We cannot create, although we may regulate and develop.

Any attempt on our part to get rid of our innate and prenatal individuality tends towards failure. Better be yourself, because you cannot be anybody else. Regulate and develop your individuality, train it to be usable, curb the manifestation of the objectionable, but do not attempt to get yourself out of your own system. You cannot do it.

Whatever you are, you must not expect to satisfy everybody, simply because that feat is impossible of accomplishment. Some folks will like you and others will not. You will have enemies if you are worthy.

The colorless man does not even shed the light of his paleness. At best he is but a reflector, and there is little warmth in reflected rays. There is nothing direct or positive about him. He is like a water-logged ship without a rudder, a captain, and a crew. He simply floats upon the sea of life, and even the rocks of trade have too much self-respect to assist in wrecking him. He is too small for disaster to notice.

Your individuality, properly mastered, is one of your principal selling assets. It separates you from other people. It takes you out of the mass. It gives you recognized character and the right to be respected.

You will be judged by your individuality as well as by your ability. Therefore preserve it, develop it, and handle it as you would any other perquisite, smoothing it out here and there, if it needs it, using the best parts of it and secreting the worst of it. But be yourself all the time, for the suppression of the bad in you does not mean loss of personality.

The individuality which antagonizes the buyer is not of the right kind for selling goods. Therefore, it must be controlled. Yet the perfectly smooth man, who never says anything with any degree of positiveness, who buries all the personality he has, will never amount to anything anywhere.

Every one likes individuality if it is properly served, and nobody cares anything about the namby-pamby man who is afraid of himself and of everybody else, and who is content to float and never to swim on the stream of business.

But while you are forging ahead there is no need of your butting your head against the rocks just because they happen to be in your way. The brave man steers away from danger. He circles the hills he cannot climb. He never looks for trouble, but he meets it when he has to. Only the fool is fool-hardy, for he alone fights the battles which are unworthy of valor.

To sell is to be at war. You are against competition, and part of the victory lies in the presentation of individuality and self-respect, so regulated, mastered, and handled, that they will enable you to win without bruising and without giving pain to either party.

Be yourself, anyway, and your better self. Get rid of all the bad you have in you, if you can. If you cannot get rid of all of it, then get rid of as much of it as possible, and let your trained and mastered personality be the salesman of your better self.

PUNCTUALITY IN BUSINESS

Being ahead of time may waste a minute. Being on time may save an hour or a day. Being behind time may lose a sale. The late-man always rides on the last car of the train of never-get-there.

If you make an appointment with a customer, keep it if possible. Make every effort to be on time. Nobody likes to wait, and you have no right to make him wait. If you find it impossible to meet the engagement, send word to him even at great cost, and give your reasons. If your train is late, telegraph the customer. If you are taken sick, notify him of your condition.

If you are a store-salesman, always be on time. If your train or trolley is likely to be late, take an earlier one.

Better be ahead of time than behind time.

But do not keep an appointment ahead of time, for you have no right to call upon the customer earlier than you are expected. Better wait outside half an hour and enter at the specified time than to force your presence upon him ahead of time. It may annoy the buyer to have the salesman appear before the time agreed upon.

But there is no objection to being ahead of time at the office. In fact, the ahead-of-time man is appreci-

ated, provided he starts in to work as soon as he gets there. Heads of departments and proprietors of business are usually on time or ahead of time, and the on-time man is sure to attract the notice of his employer and to gain a decided business advantage over those who get in when they get ready.

The on-time man can be depended upon. The fellow behind time is neither faithful to himself nór to his employer.

No matter if there appears to be nothing to do, and if apparently there would be no harm done if you were half an hour late or more, that day may be the very one when you are most needed. If you are there, you can attend to things. If you are not there, you take big chances.

The reputation for punctuality one is of the best business assets. If you are not reasonably sure of being able to reach a certain place at a certain time, set the time ahead. Do not try to make too close connections. Many a railroad train is late. Comparatively few arrive on time.

Let us suppose that you wire a customer that you will meet him at two o'clock, which you can do only if your train is on time. Better make it two-thirty or three, allowing for a margin of safety, than to run so close that the chances are against the keeping of the engagement.

If you are coming from a distance, and are, therefore, dependent upon the trains, it is better to tele-

graph the customer, or write him, stating that you are coming to Blanktown on the train due to arrive at one o'clock, and that you will come directly to his office. If you do not reach there on time, he will know that the train is late, and will blame the railroad, not you; whereby, if you set a specific hour, and fail to meet it, the customer may not place the blame where it belongs. Even if you have notified him that you will arrive on a certain train, it is well to telegraph him while *en route* if there is a likelihood of the train being late. The courtesy will be appreciated.

Always be on time or have an acceptable reason for being late.

THE VOICE IN SELLING

The tone or ring of the voice counts in every walk of life, except, perhaps, in that of the purely mechanical or clerical; but, even there, it is not of inconsequence.

Many a man of great mental capacity has not received his due in the pulpit because his voice was harsh and irritated his hearers. Many a lawyer failed to impress the jury because of faulty articulation.

The tone of the spoken word is of much importance, and especially in salesmanship, because there can be little of it without the use of the voice.

We are born with good or bad voices, and the man with the bad tone of voice cannot well compete with one who possesses a voice that is naturally pleasing.

But the irritable voice may be changed into one less annoying, although it never can be brought up to the standard of natural perfection.

If your voice is not acceptable to those you talk to, — and you can easily ascertain whether it is or not, — you can by care and practice change it into a less objectionable condition.

I am not suggesting that the salesman become an elocutionist, that he continuously doctor his voice; but I do advise him to take pains with it, and, if it is not what it should be, to do something to remedy the evil.

In all the large cities there are located schools of expression and of the voice. A few lessons at these institutions are likely to do much good. The experiment is worth trying, and the expense is slight. If they are unavailable on account of the distance, the advice of a physician is suggested, who can, perhaps, give you exercises which you can practice without expert instruction.

Many public speakers, and nearly all clergymen and lawyers, have been subjected to voice-education. They will assist you, if you go to them, or tell you where you can obtain help.

Even stuttering can be largely removed, and the sharp edge of a harsh voice can be toned down.

The voice, like all other faculties, is subject to some change, lends itself to development, and may be improved with proper exercise, practice, and care.

The tone of the voice is a selling asset, and no one has a right to allow this strong aid to salesmanship to be other than at its best.

So strongly do I appreciate the value of the voice in selling, that I would advise every salesman of good voice or otherwise to consult some expert on the voice, that he may help to make his good voice better or his poor voice acceptable.

WHAT TO DO OUTSIDE OF BUSINESS

Inattention to business kills business. Success is impossible unless one is deeply interested in his work and gives to it painstaking and conscientious attention; but no man is a full man, a manly man, a good citizen, and worthy of the respect of his community, who is a slave to business, and who keeps himself constantly under the lash of work.

It is true that some great generals of industry apparently never get out of the field of business, and enjoy neither diversion nor education, and are deplorably unfamiliar with men and things, caring for nothing save the making of money. These men, although of great business mark, are poor, miserable, and despised failures, and leave behind them neither monuments nor anything else save the disgust of those who traded with them and lived with them or near them.

So long as business remains strenuous, and selling a difficult task to perform, the major part of one's time must be given to business-doing; but this does not mean that one cannot breathe an atmosphere outside the store, or that he must live forever in the dust of business activity. It is better to be a man of health and citizenship, even at the sacrifice of some money,

than to remain a mere weigher and sealer of financial profit.

The good men do lives after them, and makers of money only are despised while they live and forgotten when they die.

Every one should do something besides business, and should stand for something besides the making of money. He should have some outside interest, enjoy some wholesome diversion, stand for something away from his shop or office, and have some kind of a reputation removed from his place of business and his bank.

If his interest is undivided, and he thinks of nothing and cares for nothing save that of making, buying, or selling, he is, at best, little more than an automatic coiner, a chained inmate in the metallic mint of money-making. He cannot be a citizen or a good husband or father. He is an obstructing cog in the mechanism of progress.

It has been said that a man without a hobby is a fool. Perhaps "hobby" is not just the word to use, but let it stand. It is a fact that men with hobbies, with interests which temporarily take them out of the treadmill of work and open to them new avenues for rest of body and mind, which utilize the anti-business-doing cells of the brain, actually accomplish more in their offices than do those who never allow themselves to be moved by outside influences.

These men, if well-balanced, do not neglect business

or other primary duties. When they work, they work. They concentrate their minds upon what they are doing, whether it be the selling of a bill of goods, the planning of a new business scheme, or enjoying a game of ball. They become a part of their environment. They are all business during business hours. They are all play when in the field. They take as much interest fishing in a fishless pond as they do in figuring profit and loss. They are rounded-out men. They seldom fail at trade or at play. They do not pretend to be literary, yet they are not unfamiliar with the best authors. They may not be of artistic temperament, but they open both eyes at a beautiful landscape of Nature or of the brush. They may not hold political office, yet they are good citizens. They stand for progress in and out of trade.

There is something the matter with you if you do not have something outside of your business which interests you. It may be yachting, or tennis, or golf, or fishing, or tramping, or gardening, or good reading, or politics, or anything else in the line of rest and progress, citizenship always included.

If you are in this condition, there is something the matter with you or with your business. You are not a good business man, although you may be a successful accumulator, if you have not the ability to do something, and think of something, besides money-changing.

Every real man stands for something which makes for better civilization, and does something which

fits him to better perform his business and social duties.

It is your duty to take up something in your spare time, and you can have spare time if you want to have it. As a matter of fact, you will work better when you work if you have something else to do outside of your working hours. Possibly you will not make quite so much money, but you will be a better man, a stronger man, and you will have friends.

Establish some kind of social life, even though you may be on the road. Do not be known wholly as a salesman, or a grabber of trade, or a hard-fisted manipulator of business things.

Be posted on something outside of your livelihood-making. Be known for something besides your business activity and trading accomplishments.

Be well-read on some subject, if you like to read; and, if you do not, cultivate the habit.

If you enjoy the water, be a good yachtsman and know how to steer your boat. If you play tennis, play a good game, and throw your heart into it while on the court.

Put the same energy, life, and interest that you give to business into the desirable things outside of business. Have something about yourself that will make friends and hold them.

The concentration you give to business should, to some extent, govern your outside actions.

Do not have too many forms of diversion. You

have not the time to do all things well, — in play or in work. Success depends upon the oneness of your interests, in your ability to keep within the circle of your choice and trade.

Good citizenship is essential, and a general knowledge of current events is necessary to manhood. Good systematic reading is a part of life-building. One does not have to read a great deal to know a great deal. It is not so much how much we read, but what we read, that counts. The persistent reading of a few publications, including a good daily paper, is a foe to ignorance and a developer of one's best faculties.

(See chapter on "What to Read.")

Work, and work hard, at your business, but do not let that be the only end to your life. Your business alone does not make a marked man of you, and the mere getting of money does not stand for lasting distinction.

The best things of life are outside of business, but business must play its part while it is necessary to maintain it.

The all-work man allows his body to wear out and his mind to degenerate. He becomes a mechanical drudge, a worshiper at the gilded monument of trade.

The golden calf is only plated.

Be something besides a business man, but do not neglect business. Round yourself out into a good citizen, for your own sake and for the sake of those who come in contact with you. You will be a better business

man for it, and you will be respected by all of your associates, and then you will lead a happy life, and when old age comes you will not be a dried-up bag of money, and there will be some jingle to your life save the rattle of coin.

WHAT TO READ

The book does not make the man. Book-learning alone is worth practically nothing, but few men ever knew anything, or ever did anything, who did not know about books.

Book-reading and book-learning, combined with outside experience, accomplish the flush of result. One without the other stands for next-to-nothing.

There are thousands, yes, hundreds of thousands, of book-read men, who are but derelicts floating on the sea of education, useless to themselves and menaces to the progress of intelligence. They are examples of what education cannot do, — shattered, mouldy, mossy monuments of useless endeavor. They are storehouses of information, with a hundred entrances and no exits, misers of knowledge, accumulators who do not distribute.

If you would be a salesman, do not be a book-worm, for it is your business to walk and run, not to crawl.

But do not despise books. They should be a part of your social and business life. Without them you would be unfinished and unfit for all of the big things and for most of the small things.

Because there are so many good books, it is probably well for me not to designate by names the best ones for the salesman to read. It is obvious that I

cannot, at arm's length, be familiar with individual conditions and preferences. Your time is limited. You cannot possibly read all there is, or a hundredth part of the best. Read what you want to read, provided it is sensible and profitable, and remember that what you get out of what you read counts more than the number of books you read.

Taste for good reading can be cultivated. What you do not like to-day you may love to-morrow. The best way to discover what are the best books to read is to pick out what you like, and then to consult with your friends or with others competent to advise you. There are a dozen people in every community who are well-read, who know books, and who can help you. But be careful about selecting your advisers. As you are not to be a scholar or a litterateur, it is not essential to make a specialty of reading many of the works which somewhat exclusively appeal to professional book-readers. The expert literary man in advising you may shoot too high for you, or, perhaps, too low for you, because he may not appreciate simplicity and may confine his recommendations to books too heavy to float. But his advice is good if you offset it with suggestions from people who come in closer contact with every-day men and things.

The advice of any one person is seldom safe to follow, but composite suggestion is pretty sure to be good. Talk with both professional and every-day people, and then compromise between the two. Ex-

change reading experiences. Read books for the good that they will do you, and not wholly for entertainment; but do not forget that you have a right to be entertained a part of the time.

As a salesman you should know about business in general as well as about general things, and much of this can be obtained from books. Any librarian can give you a list of good business books, and intelligent merchants know something about them. If you cannot see them personally, write to them. The editor of your trade paper can be of much assistance to you.

Read a good daily paper with persistent regularity, and do not skip any part of it. Read the editorials as well as the news, and do not omit the miscellany.

Habitually read one or two local dailies, including the advertisements, especially those of the line you follow.

The newspaper is the mirror of the business and social life of its community and of the country and world at-large. It has its imperfections, but no more than those possessed by people in general, and it is, as a rule, of a grade higher than that of its community. Without the newspaper there could be little intercommunication, and most of the good in the world would be undistributed. The good newspaper is in the van of progress. The reader of a well-conducted newspaper cannot be an ignorant man.

The advertising columns always contain information of strong business value, so much of it that I would

advise all business men to regularly read at least a part of the advertisements.

Subscribe to magazines devoted to salesmanship and to general business. Do not neglect the trade paper. Read every issue of it, from beginning to end, including the advertisements. Some of the trade papers thoroughly represent the trade, and others are poorly gotten up and miserably edited; but there is something worth while in all of them. If your firm does not subscribe for them, or you cannot buy them while away, have them sent to your house or purchase them on the road. Read them conscientiously and thoroughly. There is a lot of wheat among the chaff, and if you are interested and discriminating, you will separate the good from the poor.

Not only read about the particular things you sell, but familiarize yourself with the goods which you do not sell, if the house you are working for carries them; and become familiar, by reading and otherwise, with everything pertaining to your business and to all general business which may indirectly benefit you.

Read regularly some good review, a paper or magazine which comments upon current events and which covers the whole world of information. There are several of these published, and most of them are worth subscribing for.

Read, besides, one or more magazines devoted to general literature. They will furnish you with both entertainment and instruction.

Keep up your reading systematically. Spend half of your reading time in general reading, the other half in reading about your business.

Be so much interested in your goods and in your work that you will enjoy reading everything pertaining to them, from the climate where the beginning of them grows, to the packing-boxes in which they are shipped.

WIT AND HUMOR IN SELLING

Genuine wit and clean-cut humor are profitable commodities in any market, and should be carefully cultivated. The possessor of them has an advantage over those who are too sedate, too dense, and do not or cannot appreciate the lights and sparkles of life.

The wit and the humorist are the creators of human sunshine. They have a distinct and necessary place in the world.

I would pity, yes, I would be somewhat suspicious of the man who possessed no sense of humor. There is something the matter with him somewhere.

The man of strong individuality and of marked ability, the owner of most of the elements of success, can usually crack a joke, or appreciate one, or do both.

But wit, valuable as it is, must be handled with the nicest care. It is a delicate proposition considered commercially. It is more of a hair-spring than a main-spring. If it is always in evidence, or if there is too much of it, it is sure to work injury to its possessor. Too much wit is like a diamond without a setting, — there is nothing back of it in the way of contrast.

Selling goods is more or less cold-blooded business. It is serious to the buyer, because it takes his money;

and equally serious to the seller, because he does it for a living. Therefore, the introduction of wit, or the funny story, should be carefully safe-guarded.

The successful seller caters to the impulses and desires of the customer. He must do it or fail. It is for the buyer, not the seller, to set the conversational pace, to designate the policy of everything outside of business.

The salesman may take the business initiative, but to the seller is allowed the privilege of controlling the social initiative.

If you, as a seller, are reasonably certain that the buyer would enjoy a funny story, or a display of wit, give it to him.

Even the best of wit is sometimes considered flippancy by some men, and especially by the buyer if he is harassed and naturally morose. The best story may prevent a sale on one occasion and help to consummate one on another.

The best rule to follow is never to joke, or to tell a funny story, or to enter into any social conversation, unless encouraged to do so by the buyer.

Of course, if the salesman is intimately acquainted with the buyer, or they are warm personal friends, he then may have excuse to let down the bars at will, for this friendship carries with it social rights, but even here it is better to be careful.

The improper story is never in good taste, and cannot assist in selling goods. Even the teller of the questionable joke may not respect the salesman who outrages

decency in his stories. Unclean fun is a dangerous proposition everywhere.

But a cheery face and a genial smile are always acceptable and must work for success. They cannot antagonize anybody. They are absolutely non-irritant.

When in doubt, do not be funny. Be business-like first, humorous afterwards. Never carry your wit to a market which will not appreciate it.

RECREATION AND EXERCISE

Although I have touched upon these subjects under the chapter heading of "What to Do Outside of Business," I believe that they are of sufficient consequence for a chapter by themselves.

The book-worm and his business brother crawl through life, accomplishing little for humanity, including themselves. Voluntarily they bury themselves in books or business and forever remain in the tombs of their choice. They begrudge the hours of sleeping and of eating, and refuse to reciprocate the smile of the sun. They load, but they seldom fire. Their ammunition, procured at the cost of manhood, remains a useless thing, contributing nothing to any kind of up-building.

Occasionally we find men who stick to business at a sacrifice of everything worth having, including the better part of business. They are a detriment to trade, a menace to society.

Neither the body nor the mind can do its best without periods of rest. It is not how much we work, but how we work, that counts.

The successful and economical man economizes his time. When he works he works with all his body and mind, and when he rests he relaxes all over. He plays

as heartily and as faithfully and conscientiously as he works.

Loafing is not resting, nor does it contribute a fraction of a mite to the making or maintenance of either the physical or the mental. But the right amount of recreation, the proper letting down of the bars, the hearty laugh, the real play, contribute mightily to the building of the monument of success in every calling.

Sticking to business should not be confined to the exclusive doing of business, for it is as important to be in a condition to do business as it is to do business itself.

Few of us are so situated that we cannot get moments and hours of recreation, time and opportunity to recuperate, to make the body and mind better able to stand the strain of work.

If you would succeed, if you would develop the best of yourself, take care of yourself. If your occupation is such that there appears to be no opportunity for exercise, first make sure that no opportunity exists, and then make a change if it is possible. Yes, make a change if it requires a sacrifice.

All the money in the world is worthless if you have no time to enjoy it. The highest business or professional position is of inconsequence if there is nothing back of it or around it.

Relaxation is easy to obtain in most cases for one constantly and conscientiously hunting for it.

If you live near your place of business, walk to it

every day or nearly every day. A pair of heavy shoes, a rain-coat, and an umbrella will allow you to take your daily walk irrespective of the weather. Folks seldom get cold or become sick from being exposed to the natural elements, unless they are hot-house plants unused to naked air and sunshine.

If you live quite a distance from the office, walk a part of the way, and do it systematically and regularly. Find some friend who will walk with you, for companionship doubles the value of diversion.

When you walk, learn to walk properly. If you do not know how, find out. Your doctor will gladly tell you, and much better than I can on the printed page.

Do not eat your lunch alone. Go to lunch with somebody, or arrange to meet friends at luncheon.

Do not spend all your evenings in book and magazine study or in reading. Converse with others. Play a frequent game of profitable conversation where all at the table win.

Set aside a few evenings every week for social intercourse. Have friends come to your house and go to theirs. Do not spend all your time card-playing, but talk matters over, and have a social good time discussing all things of interest, in a light, easy, conversational way.

Do not limit your friends to those in your business. Get outside of your business a part of the time and exchange experiences with those who do not work as you do.

Play ball if you get a chance, and you can do it even in Winter. If there is a gymnasium near by, and good jolly fellows attend it, join the gymnasium, but do not over-exercise or become an athlete.

Better be outdoors than indoors. Learn to swim, and swim at every opportunity in the ocean, lake, and river, when the water is warm, and patronize the swimming school in the Winter.

Take trolley rides, so as to get a diversity of scenery; but when you leave the trolley, walk, and walk part of the way back, picking up the trolley *en route*.

Have some objective point. Do not walk aimlessly or alone, if you can help it. There is more enjoyment and real diversion in traveling a mile with a friend, or to meet a friend, than there is in attempting to walk two miles with nobody to see nobody. Get out of yourself at every proper opportunity.

Do not be so much engrossed in business that you can think of nothing else, because if you do not think of something else, and do not do something else, you will be deficient in business.

If your work requires a certain kind of exercise, take a different kind when out of the shop.

Never take any diversion without an aim or a purpose. Do not make hardship of it. Get pleasure out of it. You can if you will.

Getting physically tired in moderation, if there is nothing seriously the matter with you, means a better night's sleep and a greater capacity for work. But do

not get over-tired. There is such a thing as over-doing any kind of exercise. Never over-strain yourself or take physical chances, for the strenuous sports do much more harm than good, and often injure for life.

If you are naturally athletic, and enjoy severe exercise, do not go into it until you have consulted a good physician that you may know your limitations. It may not hurt you to get tired, but exhaustion is injurious. Do not allow yourself to always decide for yourself. No man, unless a physician, knows his physical strength or how much he can stand, and thousands of young men have driven themselves into premature ill-health by over-exercise. Consult somebody who knows.

Physicians, nowadays, are strong advocates of outdoor exercise, but none of them believe in strenuous athletics. For a few dollars they will tell you just how to take care of yourself.

Do not allow yourself to be guided wholly by books on physical culture, for the book cannot diagnose, and unless you have been professionally trained you cannot possibly know what to do and how to do it.

It is just as much your duty to take care of your physical health as it is to train your mind or do business. And it is your further duty to scientifically and intelligently find out what is best for you to do, and not to depend upon your lack of knowledge or upon the advice of the untrained.

But do not over-do diversion. Diversion is only a

part of life. The all-time baseball fan, the ever-running crank, and other kinds of athletic enthusiasts, become so much interested in outside things that they cannot properly attend to business. The extremist, either in business or in play, is a natural fool or has acquired foolishness.

There is one thing which you cannot over-stock in, and that is common sense. Apply the same common sense to your play as you do to your business, and do not allow yourself to be your sole dictator.

What you want to do in the way of play or exercise may not be the best thing for you to do.

Although dissipation frequently accompanies the action of diversion, it has no right to be a part of it.

A glass of whiskey can spoil a day of pleasure and bring you back to your work much worse off than if you had slaved in the office.

Never do anything in the way of diversion which is wholly physical or wholly mental. Combine the two. Otherwise you make drudgery of it.

But get diversion and exercise some way, and you can in most cases, if you will.

CANVASSERS AND BOOK AGENTS

Commercially speaking, the house-to-house canvasser and peddler, and the seller of books outside of the store and the trade, are designated as canvassers or book agents. As a matter of fact they are salesmen, and none of them are agents in any sense. The act of the agent involves his principal, who is legally responsible for his doings. The book agent is agent in name only.

These sellers differ primarily from others in that they do not sell to the trade as a rule, do not stand behind the counter, do not have places of business, and do not usually sell goods to be sold again. They do not cater to any regular trade, as does the shoe salesman, for example, although they may have a selected list of customers.

It has been said that it is more difficult to sell from house to house than it is to sell in any other way. This cannot be so, because, if it is, the selling of these articles would require a very high grade of salesmanship, and men and women who apparently are not possessed of even ordinary selling ability would not seem to be able to make a living.

The expert book agent, — and allow me to use this term because it is so common, — who handles encyclopedias and other voluminous and high-priced works, —

has the fundamental characteristics of a great salesman, and probably would succeed as a regular seller of trade commodities. But the average book agent sells books because he cannot find anything else to do, or thinks that he cannot, because no capital is required, because he can usually begin without experience, and because he can work to-day and stop to-morrow, and be a sort of go-as-you-please seller. A proportion of these people do not continue in the business, but take up some other line if they can find it.

A superintendent of book agents, employing thousands of men and women, told me that anybody who could talk could sell books, and that talking was the prime requisite. The fact that most book agents are fluent talkers, whether they know how to talk or not, and the further fact that a large amount of vocal energy is expended at the consummation of every sale, would indicate that the rapid and fairly good talker would make a good book agent.

The high-class book agent may earn from $5,000 to $6,000 a year, although the latter figure is very unusual. He succeeds because he has the right selling stuff in him, is everlastingly persistent, uses good judgment, has the power of diagnosing the customer, is a good judge of human nature, and is willing to stand any kind of rebuff, even insult. These men are geniuses, and many of them would make less money in some other calling, although it is probable that they would do well in almost any selling direction.

But the rank and file of book agents and other canvassers either do poorly or fairly well, and seldom make more than a living, often because they do not exert themselves.

The book agent, first of all, should know his books and be familiar with similar works. He should carry with him, not only his own opinion about the book for sale, but that of authoritative readers, — men and women of mark, — that he may present arguments other than his own, and be ever ready to quote authorities.

He should know what the book is good for, what it will do, and how it will help the reader, especially the last. He should school himself not to be affected by constant failure, because he cannot expect to sell to every one he meets; yet he must have that persistency that will allow him to feel that every one he sees is a possible customer, and he must, while before the customer, show the confidence of expected success.

He should have a general literary or scientific knowledge of books in general, and possess the power of description. He should allow the customer to do some of the talking; in fact, he should encourage him to do so, because the more the customer talks the easier it is for him to find out what the customer wants, and he is then better able to present the book specifically.

He should be so familiar with the book that he can turn to any page of it upon request, and speak intelligently and emphatically on any point mentioned.

Many people buy books, not for their entirety, but for some particular part of them; and the presentation of some one picture or chapter may be sufficient to sell the book. It is, therefore, incumbent upon the seller to discover the likes and dislikes of the customer.

The names of prominent buyers of the book are of consequence. The agent should obtain a list of the friends of his customers and permission to use their names. Most folks, especially the common people, follow a leader, and buy what others buy.

The good book agent obtains a list of possible customers and finds out something about them in advance. He does not waste time in presenting an undesirable book to them.

The method of approach is of extreme importance. Most people seem to have an apathy against all book agents and canvassers, and they will say "no," and snap it out, even though they may buy afterwards. They may refuse to allow the agent to talk.

Great control of one's feelings is necessary. The slightest show of irritation on the part of the agent is fatal to a sale. He must meet a frown with a smile, and create a good impression at the start. It is difficult to bring a customer into a buying mood, unless the first few words, and the manner in which they are expressed, are pleasing to the customer.

Stereotyped stories or descriptions, recited in a parrot-like manner, are to be discouraged.

The agent should get in connection with others of

his class and exchange experiences. If he is at all proficient, he will learn how to meet men and women, and frame a sort of informal form of presentation or argument which is likely to work well under usual conditions.

Courage is absolutely necessary in the selling of books or house-to-house articles, because the agent generally interrupts the work of the housewife and business man, and most of them are not professional buyers.

Success requires almost instantaneous quickness, and a large amount of personal persuasion. But back of it all is that everlasting persistency and refusal to recognize failure, that schooled ability to pleasantly meet both insulting rebuff and placid indifference.

It offers a living to most people who are willing to work, and it certainly presents one with an opportunity to gain a large amount of experience.

The same principles which apply to the selling of books from house to house are equally pertinent to the selling of any other articles by canvassers.

THE ACADEMIC EDUCATION OF THE SALESMAN

What should be the academic or school education of the seller of goods? It is as well to ask what should be the educational requirements of anybody about to enter any department of business.

The answer is terribly vexed. There is almost a babel of opinion concerning it. The curriculums and methods, from those of the between-town school to the university post-graduate course, show, perhaps, a greater diversity of professional and every-day ideas than exists in any other department of human affairs.

The academic side of education is deservedly receiving the earnest thought of the whole civilized world. Thousands of conscientious, highly educated, and trained men and women are giving their lives to the cause, and are attempting to formulate an educational policy which will be somewhat universally acceptable to the people at-large.

The pessimistic educator and researcher may claim that educational curriculums, methods, and policies have shown less improvement than the changes wrought in any other department of business or commercial science.

Even the optimistic man of learning is not able to refute all of the damaging statements made, for it is

quite probable that if a totally unbiased and fair jury could be impaneled that it would be able to discover ample evidence of greater improvement along purely business lines than in educational fields.

Business-doing and manufacturing have undergone an almost complete change. There are, to-day, few machines or processes which were used a few years ago; while in the educational world one finds a majority of old methods in vogue, which are acknowledged by educators to be unfit for their work; and yet these methods continue to prevail, because expert academic learning and educational direction do not seem to be as active and as progressive as is the selfishness of business.

But the book reader and the business worker, the academic researcher and the expert at trading, are getting together, each contributing his part to what cannot help becoming a profitable whole, and we may confidently look forward to the early arrival of an educational train directly connecting the school-house with the house of business.

Present academic education, broadly speaking, consists of what is given in the common schools, the high school, the classical or preparatory school, the technical school, and the college.

However much we may differ, it is impossible to find, in and out of the educational craft, any one who does not consider a grammar school education essential to any kind of business-doing.

While it is true that some illiterate business men have become marvelous financial successes, not one of them would claim that lack of education did anything for him, and probably all of them would be fair enough to admit that if they had had more school training they would have been better off socially and financially.

Therefore, I think I may safely contend that the would-be salesman, and all those who would enter business, should have at least a grammar or common school education, without which they would be materially handicapped, not only at the start but all through life. And I would most emphatically advise any one intending to enter business to graduate from what is known as a high school, an institution which is both a preparatory and a finishing school.

While attendance at this latter institution may not be considered absolutely essential, it is, I believe, of great consequence, as it gives a knowledge of men and things, which the lower schools cannot possibly present, and then it teaches one how to teach himself, makes him better able to grasp a situation, gives him a higher respect for himself, and prevents a feeling of educational deficiency.

The high school course comes at the right time in one's life, when he has finished the Three R's of Education, is old enough to better weigh educational values, and is in the best condition for the absorption of academic knowledge. Later on in life he cannot as easily

acquire the fundamentals, and he is not likely to have the time for school-room training. The three or four additional years are not wasted, and one should certainly contribute this time to academic study unless financial or other obstacles arise.

Would I advise the coming salesman to go higher academically, to graduate from the technical school, or institute of technology, or college?

If he is going to sell goods of a technical nature, graduation from a good institution of technology will broaden him out generally and will make him better able to meet his customers and to override technical and other difficulties. I would advise him to attend this higher technical school if he can do so without too great a sacrifice of money, health, and time.

But I would not suggest to the young man in financial straits that he live in a cold room and upon insufficient food, at a sacrifice of mental and bodily health, for the sake of this technical school training.

When it comes to the college or university, we find an even greater diversity of opinion. Some business men of mark feel that a college education is essential to the flush of success, while others consider it a good thing, and still others are pronouncedly opposed to it, the last believing that four years at college amount to little more than four years of wasted time for one who is going to take up a business career.

A friend of mine, one of the most expert salesmen in the country, a manager of salesmen, and an active

partner in the business, told me that out of the large number of college men starting in his house, few of them seemed to know how to take hold or to really do things in other than an indifferent and mechanical way. He said that his experience with college men proved to him that a classical education was likely to be not only useless but detrimental to success in business.

Another business friend of mine, a man with a national reputation for shrewdness and for building up and maintaining great business enterprises, is a strong advocate of a college course for those who would enter business. Although not a graduate himself, he put all of his boys through college, and as soon as a boy graduated, he was placed in one of his factories, at the very bottom, forced to wear over-alls, and to carry labor's dinner pail. This man has employed many college graduates, and his experience with them is directly opposite from that of my other business friend.

But I think the majority of business men would differ from both of the men I have described. Comparatively few of them would insist that a college education is essential, and not many of them would condemn the college graduate.

Personally I would advise any young man, whether he intends to enter business or not, to graduate from some first-class college or university, provided he can do so without undue sacrifice.

If he is poor and not physically robust, and must fight to earn his way through college without proper food or other necessities, I would most emphatically condemn a college course for him if he intends to enter business. I do not believe it is worth to him what it would cost him. But, if he can afford it, and can have it without too great a sacrifice, I believe that he will be better off in the end, both socially and in a business way.

College membership gives one an opportunity to make many firm and lasting friends. The college men are together for four or more years; they work together, sleep together, and play together. These years establish a fraternity of the strongest kind. Graduation does not break it. It remains. These acquaintanceships and friendships are an everlasting asset, not only a social one, but one which can be applied to business.

Then, the very environment of a good college is conducive to better citizenship and to the establishment of a high-grade of manliness.

College never made a fool or a fop of a boy. If he came out one, he would have been one without the intervention of the college. Certainly a college education cannot injure a salesman, unless he is bound to be injured anyway, and then it does not make much difference whether he is educated or not.

But no man of business judgment would dare to assert that a college education is essential to good

salesmanship. Success may be made with or without it. In many cases greater success with it; in some cases more success without it. It is simply a question of whether one desires a college education and can afford the time and money.

For the moment let me leave the academic side of education and consider self-teaching. No man is equipped for a living in salesmanship, or in anything else, no matter what his school education may be, if he drops learning when he leaves the school-room or the campus. Men who amount to anything are learning all the time. The store is their school-house and the street their college. There is no place in the world for the man who stops.

Good reading, conversation, contact with men and things, will do as much or more than can any educational institution, after one has learned the fundamentals.

I say this without disparagement to the school or college, because he who knows nothing of books and little of school is either a fool or is likely to be one, and so it is with him who knows only books and has never drawn from the inexhaustible library of the great outdoors.

Books and experience rightly mixed make the compound of success. Neither is worth much of anything without the other.

To sum up, let me say that probably the best rule to follow is to get all the education you can afford.

It is not wasted time if it is so you can give it. But it is unprofitable to have too much academic education if conditions present almost insurmountable obstacles.

Graduate from a high school, anyway, even at considerable sacrifice, and go as much higher as conditions will allow, always remembering that what you get at school is only the beginning of your education.

Academic training better prepares you for life by making you better able to learn, to grasp, to absorb, and to utilize.

This early school education will avail you little unless you begin to study harder after you leave school than you ever did in the school-room.

Adapt your school education so far as you can to what you are going to do. One form of academic education is essential or valuable if you are going in a certain direction, while another should be taken if your after life is to be different.

The establishment of specialty schools is growing rapidly, and in many places one can obtain forms of school training somewhat adapted to his future work. For the present, this condition does not exist except in a few centers, and is unavailable to the many.

The curriculum of the general school, although it may not be directly adaptable to your coming work, gives you a general and a somewhat broad education, which you can adapt to your necessities.

Until the schools combine both the general and broad

training with a specific training especially adapted to your needs, the best you can do is to obtain this general education, adapting its generalities to your requirements.

This general education, however far removed it may be from your personal needs, is of consequence, because, while it may not add a stone to your superstructure, it gives you a foundation to build upon.

THE VOICE OF SELLING EXPERIENCE

APPENDED are personally written articles from twenty-nine representative business men of recognized success, and of large and varied experience in salesmanship.

Every one of the writers has been, or is, a salesman of marked achievement; and all of them are either directly selling goods, or are sales-managers, or are in charge of business outputs.

None of them are theorists. Every one of them has earned his position in the selling world by coming in direct, active, and working contact with buyers of his class.

Each one tells his story from his individual standpoint, and, collectively, the articles present a composite picture of selling success.

The articles are printed as written, having been subjected only to proof-reader's corrections.

The articles appear alphabetically, by company names, so as to avoid even the appearance of partiality.

JOHN R. AINSLEY

Of the Firm of John R. Ainsley and Company, Importers and Manufacturers of Hosiery, Underwear, and Notions, Boston, Mass.

The principles of salesmanship, as applied to the dry-goods business, consist in mastering details, in securing a knowledge of merchandise and in studying human nature. To perfect oneself in the details requires perseverance, utilizing every moment of time, and an earnest desire to learn everything possible from A to Z regarding the make-up and use of the various articles offered for sale; to exercise care in taking orders or serving customers, so as to clearly understand what is wanted in color, size, and quantity; to write orders legibly; and to be correct and precise as to prices, terms, and shipping directions, thus preventing mistakes from careless writing or poor figures or misunderstandings; to be honest as to traveling expenses, and in the disposition of time that belongs to the employer; to handle samples with judgment and care, knowing that they cost money, and to be replaced means added expense; to be correct in deportment, appearance, and habits; and to have a methodical way of doing everything in a proper way, at the proper time, and in the proper place.

A knowledge of merchandise is now absolutely necessary, no half-way business will pass muster. High

schools of commerce, technical schools, and trade pamphlets are doing much towards supplying information about merchandise, and buyers, as a rule, are well posted on "what's what," so that a salesman must know what he has to offer, how to state his story, how to make comparisons as to quality and price, and must inspire confidence in himself, in his story, in his goods, and in his firm, and he must study character, know how to approach individuals (there are no two alike), and how to adapt himself to all sorts of people.

He must make himself right with his prospective customers, and prove to them that his word is as good as his bond, and that the maxim, "All wool and a yard wide," can be figuratively applied to the man as well as to the merchandise.

Brilliancy and braggadocio don't count; but plain, honest, hard work does the business every time.

FRED L. HOWARD

MEMBER OF THE FIRM OF C. A. BROWNING AND COMPANY, WHOLESALE MILLINERY AND SILK, BOSTON, MASS.; PRESIDENT, BOSTON CREDIT MEN'S ASSOCIATION

While salesmen in general are included in the few thoughts here set down, it is the wholesale and traveling distributer of merchandise who is especially in mind.

The great influence of such persons upon the traffic

of the world, the ethics of trade, and even the morals of life in general, make them not only an important consideration, but quite an interesting sociological proposition.

We sometimes hear of "Born Salesmen," and born salesmen there may be, but Salesmanship is the birthright of no one. Salesmanship is acquired, and one can no more be born with that acquisition than he can be born educated. It is true that some are born with the selling talent and take to trading naturally, but the ethics of trade, upon which all success in selling is based, must be studied to be understood and may be acquired by all.

As between the possessor of much talent and little moral sense, and one of little selling talent and a keen sense of the ethics of trade, much more is to be expected of the latter, in the end. With the talent, or gift, of selling in the highest degree, one may prove a sad failure as a salesman, as plentiful examples show.

Even with a thorough knowledge of the goods to be sold, a good understanding of human nature, patience, perseverance, industry, and the valuable possession of a winning personality, no one can achieve either great or permanent success as a salesman, without a sense of honor and justice and the constant practice of these principles.

Salesmanship is so much a matter of morals, that to be a successful salesman is to be an upright man.

The time is not confined to the memory of the very aged, when "the best end of the bargain" theory was

the prevailing policy in selling goods. Somewhat longer ago, a great English writer's comment on commerce in his time was that "honor sinks where commerce long prevails." More and more the prevailing policy is coming to be "a square deal" for all.

It was the merchant prince, A. T. Stewart, who claimed that the greatest factor in his success was the invariable practice of giving value received.

Many men, who think they are struggling against Fate, are merely struggling against the effect of a poor policy, or the lack of any policy at all, upon which to base the conduct of their business. To drop a poor policy, to learn to adopt a good one, will generally turn defeat into success.

It is one of the best policies for every salesman to remember that his own success must come through the success of his customers, and that every advantage he takes at their expense is, in the end, bound to be an injury to himself. Let him never forget the fable of "the goose and the golden eggs," that his trade is the goose that lays the golden eggs for him, and that, in his own interest, if for no higher reason, his customers' interests must be carefully conserved and assisted in every reasonable way possible.

The opposite course may at first appear to bring quicker and better results, but it will limit him to few transactions with such customers, narrow his field of opportunity day by day, and the small advantage temporarily gained will cost him the con-

fidence of the buyers he might have profitably retained for many years, and also cost him the loss of his own self-respect.

A good salesman must be a good sport. He must be a good loser as well as a good winner. He must learn to wait as well as to work, and if he is working along wise, upright, honorable lines, he is sure to win, and his success will be permanent.

It is an unfortunate salesman who does not appreciate the dignity of his work. The seller of merchandise is a factor of great consequence in the enormous and ever-increasing volume of business of the world. It is to him the importer, manufacturer, and wholesaler look for the consummating results of their labor. It is largely upon him that the reputation of his house depends, and the nature of the relations between his employer and the trade is largely in his hands.

It is also an unfortunate salesman who sees nothing in his business but labor for gain and gain for labor.

His opportunities for helpfulness, for doing good while doing business, are on every hand. The poor manager, the unwise buyer, the inexperienced and the discouraged shopkeeper, are all opportunities in his life for helpfulness, which, if improved, will not only insure business success to himself, but make his work a joy, and his life worth living. To paraphrase the poet a little:

> Where all is only a selfish gain
> 'T is useless to excel.

FRANK E. HILL

MANAGER, BROWNING, KING AND COMPANY,
CLOTHIERS, NEW YORK CITY

The selling of merchandise is not only a pleasant, but an easy task. There are three important factors of salesmanship, namely, to read human nature at a glance, having a keen interest in the merchandise, together with prompt and efficient service to the customer.

The great mistake which is often made in selling goods is trying to persuade a customer to take an article which he does not care for. This, in itself, is poor salesmanship, and while there are many definitions of salesmanship, and what constitutes a salesman, I believe the man who builds up the business and is able to take care of it from season to season is the man who would secure the most votes in a competition on salesmanship.

It was in the store of Marshall Field & Co. that I had the opportunity to study human nature and salespeople. I made application to Mr. Selfridge, who was at that time a manager of the retail store, and now a merchant of London, for a position as salesman in one of his departments. In referring to one of his best salesmen, he said: "Give me two men as good as he is and you may have him."

In reply to my question as to why he considered him so good, he answered: "He could serve more than one customer at a time, used excellent judgment in introducing the merchandise, and the customers were pleased with his attention."

Special attention to customers, without giving the impression that you are too eager to make the sale by an over-display of merchandise, is appreciated. This suggests the thought that a customer should never be allowed to leave your store dissatisfied, and a salesman will promptly report to the manager any complaint a customer may have. These matters should be handled with promptitude and void of argument in adjusting a claim, for there is no better advertisement for a firm than a well-pleased customer.

The development of young people to assume positions as salespeople requires much patience and careful instruction from their beginning until they are given a sales-book. I regret space will not permit my explaining in detail the experience in this particular part of mercantile life, as the experiences are so varied that what would fit one case would prove entirely out of place in another.

It is a mistake to try to have young minds absorb the fundamental principles, even in selling goods, in a short space of time; but careful instruction at a well-defined time, say, immediately after they have served a customer, and you saw that the customer was not entirely satisfied with the manner in which

the goods were presented or with the knowledge the salesman seemed to have of the merchandise; then is the time to correct them, and if they are quick to absorb, it will not happen the second time.

It often occurs that the salesman will say "No" (when a customer asks for some specified article), "I am unable to give you that," instead of introducing something which is a little superior, or even a little less in price, where this same customer was given to another salesman, and in five minutes made a purchase of items which were already in the store, but had not been shown. This would come under the point of good salesmanship.

W. ATLEE BURPEE

HEAD OF THE FIRM OF W. ATLEE BURPEE AND COMPANY, GROWERS OF SEEDS, PHILADELPHIA, PA.

One basic requirement for a successful salesman, to-day, is absolute integrity and honesty. He must neither lie nor misrepresent in any way, and naturally he cannot afford to be connected with a house that would permit misrepresentation, either as to quality or value of goods. This may not have been true a generation ago, but the standard of business ethics has advanced so steadily that now no house (and no salesman) can be permanently successful unless they

gain (and deserve) a reputation for plain truth-telling and square-dealing.

Salesmanship to-day, being upon a higher plane, is more attractive and offers better inducements to young men than ever before. The salesman must, of course, understand thoroughly the character of the goods he is offering, and their value. He must be imbued with a spirit of loyalty, and really believe that "our house can do no wrong," at least intentionally. He must feel himself, — and thus impart to his customers, — the confidence, that were he the *buyer* instead of *seller*, he would *buy* from the house for which he is selling.

The methods of successful business, to-day, are not based upon the ancient idea of "trying to get the better of the other fellow." In a broad sense, the interests of buyer and seller, instead of being antagonistical, are really mutual. It is only by "repeat orders" from satisfied customers (whether at wholesale or retail) that it is possible to maintain a prosperous business.

Rather than dwell upon other important requisites of good salesmanship, perhaps it would be more suggestive to the readers to state "one reason why" a dozen years ago we ceased to be represented "on the road," and became at wholesale, as we had always been at retail, "exclusively a mail-order house."

A traveler would send in orders for peas, beans, and other seeds at "cut" prices, and when we protested,

would offer the excuse that so-and-so were quoting those prices. My instructions would be, that while you must never run down a competitor, yet you should maintain the position that *you* were not selling Smith's or Brown's, but Burpee's seeds, and you knew that Burpee's seeds were *worth* the prices asked; they would bring more at retail and make satisfied customers. In other words, in such a business as garden seeds, it would pay to handle only the best grades possible to produce, and these could not be sold at the prices of "cheap seeds" to "quality-buyers." I found it almost impossible, then, to train a salesman to be willing to lose an order rather than attempt to meet competition merely in price. This may have been as much my fault as that of our salesmen. To-day, it would be easier for both of us.

However, for the past decade, we have reiterated in millions of catalogues (*our* "Silent Salesmen") the fact that:

We travel many thousands of miles each season to inspect growing crops, which are produced for us under special contracts throughout America and Europe, but never travel a single mile to solicit an order. And yet we want your trade, if you can appreciate the value of quality in seeds.

MARCH G. BENNETT

General Manager, Samuel Cabot, Inc., Manufacturing Chemists, "Creosote Shingle Stains," Boston, Mass.

We all agree that the road to successful salesmanship, like that to other heights of achievement, is unknown, but I believe that the surest and best road that we do know, in this or any other vocation, is hard work, intelligent, courageous, and persevering.

I disagree with the old saying that "salesmen are born, not made." Like most old sayings, it is only a half truth, and is discouraging.

Granted that fluency, geniality, and assurance are important qualifications, it is still true that they alone cannot make a successful salesman (or politician), and the man who possesses these qualities in abundance is less likely to be a hard worker, a student of his business, and a trained expert in his line, than the man with a smaller equipment of these superficial advantages, because the latter finds that he cannot rely entirely upon his personality, as the other man is apt to do, but must work for his success.

In every line, — business, politics, law, and athletics, — we see numerous examples of men who seem to have been especially equipped by Nature for success distanced by others whose one advantage over them is that genius which is *the capacity for hard work.*

The combination of these qualifications, of course, produces the brilliant success that establishes our standards, and, if we argue solely from such examples, a successful salesman must possess all the qualifications which Dr. Johnson required to make a poet, and then some. But, in my judgment, the average intelligent young man who wishes to become a salesman can succeed by hard work, using his brains to study his business and his customers and to sustain his courage. He can educate himself in the science and diplomacy of his calling. He will learn all those standard maxims, — never to misrepresent his goods, never to really lose his temper, to restrain an eager customer from buying too heavily a line that is not adapted for his trade, to force goods upon a reluctant customer that he knows will sell, never to forget that unless he is loyally representing his house he is not making headway; and, more, he can acquire a reputation for complete knowledge of his business that will sell goods and recommend him for promotion. When promotion comes to such a man, he is equipped for it, because he has made himself competent by hard work directed by intelligence.

Therefore, without denying the great benefit of certain accidental talents, I believe that no young man who wishes to become a salesman need be discouraged if he lacks those talents in abundance, but has brains and force.

HERBERT M. SEAVER

Salesman, Cobb, Bates and Yerxa Company, Wholesale and Retail Grocers, Boston, Mass.

The first requisite to become a good salesman is to be honest, not only with your employer, but with yourself as well. Always be obliging and courteous, never familiar. Never make a promise that will be doubtful to fulfill. A good memory is a very great asset.

Cultivate the ability to recognize customers and call them by name. Familiarize yourself with original packages and their contents.

Study prices, so that at any time you can readily quote them.

Enable yourself to write swiftly and legibly.

Never let your customers feel that you are in a hurry; your time should belong to them.

Never watch the clock. The moment you enter the employ of a firm, you should always be willing to do a little more than is stipulated in the agreement, if you aspire to grow in their esteem.

Many times you will find it impossible to go to your meals on time; and, perhaps, you will find it advantageous to your future interests to return before your meal hour has passed.

Much more might be said, but, in my opinion, a man with the foregoing qualities would be a desirable salesman.

JAMES G. BERRIEN

NEW ENGLAND MANAGER, "COLLIER'S WEEKLY," NEW YORK CITY

"Zogbaum works with a pencil: I do things with a pen —

"But you sit up in a conning tower bossing ten thousand men."

So says Mr. Kipling, with a little touch of envy mixed with admiration, to one of our admirals.

It all depends upon the viewpoint as to how much glory a man can descry in his work. There is a certain class of servants in England that counts it a glory when a son adopts his father's calling, and it is a glory to them. Four or five generations trained to wait on others have given England the best servants in the world. Four or five generations of skilled laborers have given England the reputation of making the finest guns in the world. There is a touch and feel and balance in an English gun that is the inheritance of fathers', grandfathers', and great-grandfathers' skill passed on. It is inimitable.

So, in this country, cases might be cited of succeeding generations taking up the same calling, — law, ministry, medicine, merchandising.

There is a business which has grown to enormous proportions in this country in the last fifteen or twenty years. It is too young a business to have engaged the energies of grandfathers, and there are very few fathers whose sons are old enough as yet to take up the same calling. It is the business, — some prefer calling it a profession, — of advertising.

There is coming a time when fathers, now engaged in the profession of law or medicine or in mercantile pursuits, will be as proud to have their sons take up this calling as they now are to have them go through college and take up a profession.

There is no more fascinating and absorbing business open to man. It is a young man's business. "Kipling does things with a pen — the admiral bosses ten thousand men." The editor has his influence on the thoughts of his fellow-men. The advertising man furnishes the sinews by which the editor is able to carry on his work of moulding public opinion. He makes barren lands give place to new factories. He gives more than a living to thousands and thousands of people. Ten years ago, the only place you could get a certain article was over the counter of a little retail druggist in Cleveland. Four or five thousand people to-day owe their living to the first small advertisement for this product placed in a national paper within the last ten years.

The advertising man is not restricted in his appeal to one audience. If necessary, he can talk through all

the magazines, all the newspapers, the bill-boards, the street cars, the mails; every channel of publicity is open to him to carry the news of his wares, to mould public opinion to believe in the product he is selling.

Can there be any more inviting field for a young man of enthusiasm? To tell of new products and mould opinion regarding merchandise of all sorts; to help editors reach vaster audiences through furnishing funds with which to gain greater circulation; to create new work for the workers of the world by widening markets; to minister to declining or stagnant enterprises, giving them new life; to turn barren fields into whirring homes of industry; to reduce the cost of selling goods in the line from the manufacturer to the ultimate consumer; — these are indeed substantial contributions in the way of service.

No profession offers better inducements to brains and personality. These two things are prerequisites of advertising, for one must have brains enough to see the vision of widening trade and deepening the channels of opinion, and one must also have the force and personality to show this vision to the manufacturer; and, having convinced him, he must have the endurance and courage to make the vision a vital truth.

The man who swings an arch across a mile-deep gulf, the man who rides his chariot over the avenues of the air, the explorer, — how can we bring them under one category except as pioneers? The regions of advertising have as yet been scarcely staked out,

and the need of recruits is heard on every side. It is the business of life we are in, and our pioneers must be intelligent, persistent, and wide-visioned.

There are two types of sellers of advertising, as there are two types of salesmen in every line, — the man who thinks and the other kind. The man who feels the lure of the business, but lacks the imagination and brains, is being rapidly displaced. The man who goes to a manufacturer and asks, "Anything for my paper to-day?" is being displaced by the man who constructs a concrete plan of advertising and sells it as a proposition worthy of the investment of the manufacturer's hard-earned money.

To be a salesman of advertising, one must answer to the following tests: He must have the inclination and the ability to create ideas of such sensible fiber that they will invite the attention of the prospective buyer. He must be able to win the prospective buyer's utmost confidence, for in no business is there a larger call on the faith of the buyer. He must be of such high personal integrity that he will not build a false plan for immediate gain, and he must have horse-sense enough to know that the creations of his mind have their basis in sound principles. And with these special requirements, he must have all the fundamental requirements of a salesman, such as enthusiasm, sincerity, persistence; and each of these essentials he must have developed to an unusual degree.

AUSTIN H. DECATUR

President, Decatur and Hopkins Company,
Wholesale Hardware, Boston, Mass.

In my opinion, the requisites for a good salesman are character, address, tact, a thorough knowledge of the article to be sold, and enthusiasm.

Character. "Character is not determined by a single act, but by habitual conduct." It is not formed in a day, nor can it be purchased or inherited, but must be planted in early life, and cultivated and ripened into a manhood which will win the confidence of all with whom it comes in contact. Confidence in the seller makes it easy for both buyer and seller. When a buyer has no confidence in the seller, the seller's usefulness is lost, and the goods must sell themselves or remain unsold.

Address. "Address is needed to gain the attention of the buyer and hold it until the acquaintance is made, and then character or the man will hold the confidence of the buyer." A salesman cannot be too particular about his general appearance and personal address.

Tact. "Tact is the judicious use of one's power at the right time." No salesman ever accomplished very much without being tactful. There are all kinds of people to deal with, and one must be able to adapt himself to the person and condition.

All the foregoing are important requisites for a salesman, but they are all lost sight of in comparison with a knowledge of the goods or articles to be sold, and this knowledge can be obtained only by study and hard work. If it be a general line of goods, one must begin in boyhood and spend years of time in learning, not only the goods to be sold, but the general business policy or management, in order that he may be in touch with the whole situation, and do justice, not only to his employer, but to his customer.

My experience with salesmen is that no one has ever been able to learn two or more kinds of business, and be an expert at either. Life is not long enough to master and make a success of many things. We must make a choice of some one thing, and stick to it until we win, and if we are enthusiastic and happy, we are sure to win.

One may know all about the goods he wishes to sell, and yet not meet with any great degree of success, unless he is enthusiastic and able to impart this enthusiasm to the other fellow. No young man of to-day can succeed to any great extent who is not enthusiastic in his business or occupation. In this day of sharp competition, half-hearted, indifferent methods will not suffice.

To sum up the subject, I feel that knowledge of the articles to be sold, and knowledge of the business with which one is connected, are the first great requisites; and enthusiasm which springs from loyalty to the em-

ployer or manager of the sales-department, and for the merit in the article itself, is of equal importance.

To sum it all up, the secret of success in selling goods, as well as in any other occupation in life, is WORK. The world is full of people who are too proud to beg, too honest to steal, and too lazy to work; they are the most to be pitied of any class.

FRED H. TUCKER

MEMBER OF THE FIRM OF FARLEY, HARVEY AND COMPANY, WHOLESALE DRY GOODS, BOSTON, MASS.

Selling goods successfully is an art, and one that needs to be studied as carefully as any of the so-called "higher arts." The necessary preparation may be considered under three heads:

Knowledge of yourself.

Knowledge of your goods.

Knowledge of your customer.

To know yourself, wherein your greatest powers of persuasion lie, what your limitations are; to learn to use your best weapons and discard your weaker ones; and to always be yourself and not try to be an imitation of some one else; are of first importance.

Equally important is it that you should know as much as possible about what you have to sell. The art student must spend weary years studying anatomy, architecture, or engineering, according to the subject

he is to paint. So must the salesman study, that he may say, as did the successful German who was asked why his sales were so much larger than his competitors', "No man can ask me a question about my goods that I cannot answer."

This leads to the third important factor in a salesman's success: "Know your customer." Study him as carefully as a general studies the fortifications he hopes to storm successfully. Find out the conditions that are likely to make him want your goods, also those that will work against you. Study his temperament. If you have an opportunity, learn all you can about him before you meet him, — his outside interests, as well as his business interests. Then, and only then, are you fully prepared to meet him to the best advantage.

With these foundations well laid, last, but not least, cultivate your imagination, — for it is a most potent factor. If selling to a retail dealer, try to see in your mind the goods in his window and on his counters; see the people admiring and buying them; or, if you are selling to a consumer, see him in your imagination wearing or using your goods with pleasure or profit to himself. Get the picture fixed so well in your mind that you can make the customer see it, and your sale is made.

William Morris has said: "Art is the expression of a man's joy in his work." This is as true of the well-equipped salesman as of other artists.

Know yourself, know your goods, and know your customer; and with plenty of hard work you will succeed and get real pleasure from your work. Be an artist in your business.

EMILE PICKHARDT

SALES-MANAGER, GEORGE FROST COMPANY, MANUFACTURERS OF HOSE SUPPORTERS AND "BOSTON GARTERS," BOSTON, MASS.

I once asked a young lady, highly successful in growing flowers, as to her methods. She replied: "I'll tell you a secret, — don't give it away. You must just love them." In disregarding the young lady's injunction not to "give it away," I am giving away at the same time at least *one* of the secrets of successful salesmanship: The salesman must "just love" his work.

So much has been said on this topic by able salesmen that discursive detail would seem superfluous, but it may remain to be noted that the old saying, "Salesmen are born, not made," is true only in so far as ancestral qualities of mind and personality are concerned. Some dominant factors of success in this calling are simply acquired largely by discipline and training in childhood and adolescence, but more particularly by actual experience on the road.

Naturally, under the head of inherited qualities, come native enthusiasm, patience, and a kindly dis-

position. These last-named factors are, in themselves, almost fundamental. The "I don't care," or "That be hanged," spirit is, of course, fatal to success. The man who "goes in to win," regardless of educational, mental, physical, or social handicap, is bound to make his calling at least a comparative success, sooner or later.

It is self-evident that to insure the most permanent success in this vocation, the most faithful and painstaking attention to detail is imperative. Every promise must be kept. No matter how small a customer is, he must be treated with exactly the same courtesy and consideration as a large one. *He may grow*, and if you help him, he will help you.

Absolute honesty is a first requisite in truly successful salesmanship. But to be honest with one's trade, a salesman must believe in his own goods. Every salesman should make himself thoroughly familiar with all points of excellence of his line and *never* allow his faith in his house to waiver. Rather than this, it were better to seek other connections. He should, also, have constantly in view the improvement of his line and keep his house informed of what is "doing," so that they can, by comparison with other goods, keep abreast of the times with theirs.

Some salesmen have such an abundant fund of enthusiasm that they can sell almost anything; but, while enthusiasm is an all-important factor, it does not necessarily in itself constitute *salesmanship;* and,

where there is danger of its leading to misrepresentation, it had better be curbed. Nevertheless, true enthusiasm, when based on absolute faith in one's goods and the integrity of one's house, is as contagious as the measles, and when a buyer and his department force have caught it from a salesman it usually lasts a good while. I have known such cases of contagion to be incurable.

Finally, a salesman must be a *gentleman*, whether by nature or by training, — not a gentleman merely in outward appearance and deportment, but also "*at heart.*" This is perhaps the most important thing of all. It goes deep down under the surface and into the very nature of things. There is something almost magical about the personality of a right-thinking, broad-minded gentleman, who has taken his degree not only in mere goodness, virtue, and form, but who has through the great tests of life been enabled to enter into the heart of humanity, and, by this process, come out beyond and above the mere ethical code, and is daily living in that well-spring of love for and sympathy with all human kind which makes him at once kin with all Heaven and Earth.

A salesman who has thus achieved more than mere smartness or ability, who no longer regards the world at-large merely with the cold eye of personal advantage, if he fortunately possesses the other requirements, may feel absolutely sure of the greatest possible success in this calling, for this last-named quality finds

immediate response in the heart of the buyer. The latter at once senses *more* than mere perfunctory virtue and ability in the atmosphere surrounding such a personality. He senses a *compelling attraction,* a spiritual magnetism, which may always be predicated of a man when he has arrived at the point in his metaphysical growth where the injunction "that ye love one another" is no longer to him an empty formula.

ALLAN C. EMERY

Member of the Firm of Goodhue, Studley and Emery, Wool Commission Merchants, Boston, Mass.

In order for a young man to become a successful salesman he should first of all have a thorough training of the goods he is to sell, so as to have a better knowledge, if possible, of the goods which he offers than his customers have. He should be frank and honest, and secure his customers' confidence by representing his goods fairly, and should see to it that his deliveries are equal to sample. "His word should be as good as his bond." He should study his man, find out his needs, and see that he has what the buyer wants when in the market.

He should not be small, but waive little points and get a reputation of being liberal. In every possible way he should try to please his customer, — "play the long game"; that is, he should so use a customer that

one sale will mean many, and once a customer is secured, he should see to it that he is never lost.

When the young man makes a mistake, he should confess it quickly, and do the right thing. He should avoid useless argument and remember he is paid to get orders.

He should work hard and ceaselessly, not like a way train that makes sudden dashes and then comes to a stop, but more like a freight train that is continually plugging along, not fast, but keeping everlastingly at it.

He should sell when a customer wants to buy, and not pass him up, and later urge him to buy when his wants have been supplied. When he is thrown down, he should bob up again smilingly. He should be happy and good-natured, and make friends. He should treat the office boy right, he may be the buyer some day.

He should never get discouraged, but have faith in God and man and in himself. He should believe in his goods and in his house, and talk them up with great enthusiasm.

He should cut out cigarettes; the odor of them is offensive to many men, and it has been conclusively proven that they seriously injure a young man's mental ability. He should cut out booze and other evils. It is not necessary to drink to effect sales; on the contrary, a young man needs to have his body pure and his mind clear and alert to accomplish the best results. It is easier to be a total abstainer than

a moderate drinker. He should always be ready to sacrifice pleasure for business, instead of business for pleasure, which is so often done. He should be thorough, and learn to concentrate his efforts where they count.

A good motto to have is: "I can if I will."

ALBERT BERREY

CHIEF-SALES-MANAGER, ISAAC HAMBURGER AND SONS, MEN'S CLOTHING, BALTIMORE, MD.

"I walked four blocks out of my way to come to this store to buy a fifty-cent tie because you wait on me so well!"

This expression I overheard while standing in our neckwear section the other day, and, most naturally, it made me stir and study the cause. The sales-person to whom this remark was addressed was a *master of her stock.* The knowledge this person possessed of the goods coming under her care was a pleasure to behold, as there was nothing one could ask her for that she could not immediately place her hands on.

After nearly twenty years of hard-earned experience, I sum successful salesmanship up primarily under the heading: "I fully understand the goods I handle."

Be a salesman ever so homely, — too large or too small, — even unfortunate as to the command of the English language and possessed of many other faults, if this person will be ambitious enough to "fully understand the goods he handles," his success is assured.

I have seen busy men wait many minutes for a certain sales-person to serve them, and surely for no other reason than that sales-person was capable of explaining in details the whys and wherefores of the articles in question. This not only means that he or she could tell what the fabric was, which article would wear better, what colors would blend better; but the promptness in quickly finding a desired article more than compensated for the possible original waiting to be served by a particular sales-person.

There is a decided air of confidence displayed by people who "understand the goods they handle" that makes salesmanship an easy matter, but beyond question of doubt one must study thoroughly the stock one handles and be able to converse intelligently regarding each and every article brought forward.

This summary, while thus far written of the retail sales-person, holds with equal force regarding the wholesale; in fact, even to a greater extent. Wholesale salesmen invariably call on very busy people, buyers whose every moment is seriously occupied, and he with knowledge regarding his wares is he that wins the prize.

I cannot too strongly urge upon those desiring to be good salespeople:

Study your goods.

Learn your stock.

Know what you are talking about.

And do not trust so much to luck.

THOMAS S. HALL

Sales-Manager, Hamilton, Brown Shoe Company, Manufacturers and Distributers of Boots and Shoes, St. Louis, Mo.

The qualities that go to make the great salesman are not different from those necessary to the making of a great merchant. There is an inexorable law governing success in salesmanship that must be respected, and this is the same law that governs all men who are really great. I am not one who believes in its entirety the aphorism that salesmen are born. True, we have different qualities of mental and physical make-up born in us, but the man of average mental and physical equipment may become a great salesman by using as a basis of his work the qualities of character, energy, and perseverance. These constitute the arch of success, the first named being the keystone. In my judgment, it is difficult for any man to be a great salesman who does not possess the first-named quality. He may possess the qualities of energy and perseverance and apply them vigorously, yet in the noise of the battle he can never be heard, for the reason that his lack of character is speaking so loud the trade cannot hear the words his tongue utters. While, if he possesses much character, every word, every act, is productive of results, and this must be so whether

the customer will or not, and this principle must ever be true so long as men live.

My experience has been that buyers invariably are attracted to the big, wholesome, clean, courageous man, rather than to the weak, boisterous, unethical coward.

The most influential tongue in America, to-day, attracts attention, not altogether because of the words uttered, for its possessor is not an orator, but because of the bold, aggressive, moral force behind the words which burn his thoughts into his hearers' minds. These virtues are the same as are being sought by the large business houses, knowing, as they do, that they are judged by the character of their representation. Men possessing these virtues are valuable for the reason that they lift a house onto a higher plane than could be reached, save by the presence of such men, and such are few, not because of physical or mental inefficiency, but because they do not respect the law of success, which demands they shall not hear the siren's song, shall not feel the heat and cold, shall not realize the dark of night, shall not indulge the fleeting pleasures of life, but shall concentrate their minds upon their work until they burn with enthusiasm.

The great salesman must be a student of men, and until human nature changes this will constantly excite his mind, for each day he will come in contact with a disposition new to him, and to succeed he must

be trained in the art of diplomacy, never for a moment forgetting:

"How sweet and gracious,
Even in common speech,
Is that fine sense
Which men call courtesy;
Wholesome as air,
Genial as light,
Welcome in every clime
As breath of flowers;
It transmutes aliens
Into lasting friends,
And gives its owner
Transport 'round the globe."

W. A. HAWKINS

SUPERINTENDENT, JORDAN, MARSH COMPANY, DEPARTMENT STORE, BOSTON, MASS.

MY DEAR MR. FOWLER, — Your favor informing me that you are writing a book on salesmanship duly received, and I want to tell you how glad I am to know that you realize enough the importance of salesmanship to write a book about it. May your tribe increase!

Few people realize the importance of salesmanship. It is an art. I would gladly add dignity to it by listing it among the professions, if you please. Perhaps more discredit has been cast upon this profession than upon almost any other, due to thousands who claim to be sales-people, but who in reality are not.

There is much "Quack" salesmanship in the world.

It is an encouraging sign, however, that people like yourself are realizing more and more the absolute necessity of a thorough training in order to become efficient in this work.

Perhaps one reason why many people have given so little thought to the great importance and dignity of salesmanship is that, like the air we breathe and the sun that shines upon us, it is so common. How little there is in the world into which salesmanship does not enter! Did you ever stop to think of that?

A beautiful picture, through which the artist expresses divine beauty, must be sold. The book, through which the author may change the thought of the world, must be sold (and how hard it sometimes is, artists and authors can tell you), just the same as the common commodities which change hands in the market place.

The Jordan, Marsh Company, intent upon improving service to patrons in the same ratio that other things are progressing to-day, started some time ago a School of Salesmanship, placing their best talent at the disposal of the school. Old and new employees in the store are given instruction.

It is my custom to address each class at the close of the term, at which time I always bring out a point which I would suggest that you make use of in your book.

My method is as follows:

Assuming a serious manner, I say to the class:

"As you are about to enter the employ of the Jordan, Marsh Company, there is one very important thing that you should know, and that is, who is the boss in this store. *Now, who is the boss?*" I ask, pointing to some eager student. The answer usually comes back, "Why, you are." I reply, with emphasis, "Oh, no! I'm not the boss." Again I ask, "Now, who is the real boss in this store?" All are intensely interested now. Positive voices in chorus now proclaim a member of the firm to be the real boss. I say again:

"Oh, no! He is not the boss. *The boss in this store is the customer.* It's the customer that you and I are working for. It's the customer that you and I are here to please. It's the customer who pays your wages and mine. If it were not for the customer, you and I would be looking for a job, and we might not get as good a one as we have here.

"Now, if you are sitting behind your counter, doing nothing, and you see me coming, don't jump up; but if you see the customer, the boss, coming, jump!"

This line of argument always makes a strong impression, and it strikes the key-note of good salesmanship, namely, *satisfactory service to customers.*

Wishing you much success in your work, I remain,

Very truly yours,

W. A. Hawkins.

DELLA B. BEAN

PRINCIPAL OF THE JORDAN, MARSH COMPANY SCHOOL OF SALESMANSHIP

The department store offers the sales-people unusual opportunities for getting a great deal of satisfaction from the work. This is because of the great variety in the work. The huge, modern department store is a world in miniature. The markets of all countries are scoured for the best kind of merchandise. Almost every conceivable need of humanity is catered to. Then, again, consider the variety of customers. Nothing is more interesting and helpful than the study of human nature, and what greater opportunity could there be for such study than in selling merchandise in a department store? Every customer is a different study, and requires different treatment in order to obtain the best results.

Under the circumstances, what line of business could offer a greater field for enthusiasm? The best merchandise of the world is given the sales-people to sell. In many departments, such as pictures, laces, furniture, china, bric-a-brac, rugs, etc., the highest forms of artistic expression are shown.

We all, to some extent, have a sense of the beautiful in us, and it would be strange if such merchandise did not make a direct appeal to us, and if we did not be-

come interested and enthusiastic about it. The same thing applies to all merchandise in the store. It has different prices, different styles, different materials, different makes. There is a reason for each difference in price. Styles are constantly changing. New styles, popular styles, extreme styles, and novelties are always coming in and going out. Each has its ear-marks, its desirable and undesirable qualities. The history of the production and manufacture of all merchandise is full of interest. Different materials are adapted to different uses for this, that, or the other reason. The range of valuable and interesting information about the goods in each department is without limit, and all the information is easily within our reach, if we are willing to acquire it.

A careful study of the merchandise in a department, comparison of different materials and makes, to note the points of difference, the reading of trade journals, books on special topics, and encyclopedia, — all of which are readily accessible in large cities, — are some ways in which a sales-person can become a storehouse of valuable and interesting information about the goods he is selling. Moreover, buyers are always glad to give sales-people the benefit of their long experience and accurate knowledge, if they show enough interest and enthusiasm to ask for it.

A customer comes to your department. He is not antagonistic, and you don't deal with him at arm's length. He comes to buy, and he is glad if you can

satisfy his wants. He comes very often also for information about the merchandise, and is always pleased to obtain it. You, on your side, have the best merchandise that can be procured, sufficient in quantity and variety to satisfy any reasonable demand. You have the utmost confidence in the goods you are selling. You can answer all questions the customer may ask. You can and do explain the different kinds, the reasons for the different prices, why some kinds are better suited than others for particular purposes. You can give all kinds of curious and interesting facts about the merchandise. You size-up the customer, and note his apparent station in life, his age, figure, complexion, probable taste, etc. You adapt your tact, and display accordingly. You note the effect that is being produced on him by the different kinds of merchandise shown. You can judge his likes and dislikes. The evident enthusiasm which you have for your work is infectious. It cannot help but make an impression on the customer. He can now purchase intelligently. He is impressed with your knowledge and honest enthusiasm, and relies on your judgment. He has confidence in you, and shopping to him is no longer a drudgery, but becomes a pleasure. Other customers approach, but they are different customers, of different manner and different tastes. You notice the difference, and adapt yourself accordingly. But your intelligent knowledge and enthusiasm always have the same successful result, — satisfied customers

who invariably seek you rather than the dull, indifferent sales-person in the same department.

Can this work, with all its variety and its interesting features, be called a hardship? Is n't it a fit subject for enthusiasm? And is n't there something radically wrong with the sales-person who is so blind to the possibilities of the work that he does n't seem interested and enthusiastic about it?

I have mentioned the possibilities of the work, which of themselves should arouse enthusiasm in us. There is always satisfaction in doing work in the best possible way, and this feeling of satisfaction is sufficient for doing work well.

But there is another possibility, which in this commercial age makes a strong appeal to most of us. Intelligence and enthusiasm, which make first-class sales-people, also pave the way for more important positions. The interest in our work, and the knowledge of our work which enthusiasm creates, are just what will enable us to rise to buyers' positions. Nothing else is necessary. Sales-people who have these qualities are too valuable to the store to remain long as sales-people. A department store can always get all the ordinary sales-people it needs. The supply is greater than the demand. But a department store cannot always get competent persons to fill the more responsible positions, and is always on the watch for them.

JOHN C. JUHRING

PRESIDENT, FRANCIS H. LEGGETT AND COMPANY, IMPORTING AND MANUFACTURING GROCERS, NEW YORK CITY.

A salesman to be successful must have some natural qualifications, plus energy, stick-at-it-iveness, and tact, combined with reliability. He must understand his business thoroughly and be able to talk intelligently and enthusiastically about his bonds, or real estate, or merchandise, or whatever he sells. Then, if he values the importance of presenting a good appearance, is particular as to his habits, and realizes that he must make himself profitable to his employers as well as guard the interests of a prospective customer, — he is likely to reach the top rung of the ladder in successful salesmanship.

In our weekly meetings we try to impress upon our younger or junior salesmen the importance of neatness in dress, as well as personal appearance generally, of never entering a store with a cigar in their mouth, and of never discussing a subject other than business.

We also endeavor to impress upon the minds of such new salesmen that our house has won its place by reliability, and by never misrepresenting an article and we expect them to follow along this same line.

J. WILLIAM NAYLOR

Traveling Salesman, The Menihan Company, Shoe Makers for Women, Rochester, N. Y.; President, The Shoe Travelers' Association of Chicago

The foundations of a great structure, after the excavations, are very unattractive, and yet they are the vital portion of the building, for its subsequent architectural beauty and adornment. People will pass by, but not until the attractive points are forced upon the attention of the public, will they ever be spoken of. But who would build without a good foundation, except a Fool? The successful business man must build a good foundation, or else his business will crumble; and this follows in all parts of life.

There is a science to salesmanship, which has to be worked out, which is necessary and essential in all parts before a man is a success.

In looking back for the requirements of a good salesman, and judging by those now living, and by some who have passed away, I can recall men of different temperaments, of entirely different ideas, men of different political, social, and religious sympathies; and they were all equally successful, not because they sold to their own types, but because they could count as their friends and patrons men of the opposite type, because they had certain marks in their natures that

stood out differently from other men. These "nature marks," as we may call them, were the foundations. The edifice of this type of man can never be shaken. It is built to stay, on the solid rock.

The essentials to this character can never be assumed or copied. They do not belong to the penitent; they must be the original, which can never be counterfeited. I should place them:

First, truthfulness. There are usually two ways of lying in business, — one is to lie audibly, and the other is to keep still when we ought to tell the truth and act the lie.

It sometimes takes nerve to tell the truth, but it always wins out.

The second essential, I believe, is promptness. So many days have been lost to a salesman by the tardiness of buyers! A man who has no regard for promptness is already a failure, and there is no excuse for a salesman's being tardy because somebody else is. A salesman should regard his dates the same as catching a train.

I believe industry should fit into the third place. To make good at any vocation, we have got to work. In this age of hair-splitting competition, the "race is to the swift," and the man who gets at them early and late is a sure winner, in competition with the man who indulges in quantities of slumber, if he has the essentials.

Cheerfulness we will name for the fourth place.

Were you ever down, away down, when death was almost welcome? A somber friend calls, and you have his sympathy. A cheerful friend calls, and you have his inspiration.

It is in understanding men that a salesman makes his mark in life, saying the right thing at the right time, saying nothing when there is nothing to say, being aggressive when there is something to get, standing by an absent friend, — all these come into a salesman's life.

The first duty a salesman owes to his employer is to fully understand the product of his employer, and then sell it just as his employer would sell it.

We are all inclined to put our own personality into our sales, instead of putting our personality into our employer, and, through him, into the product. A salesman should always remember that he is the middleman between his employer and his customer, and that what he says and does create a binding influence or cause a breach.

I believe, with all sincerity, that if a salesman will stick to the essentials, he cannot help being a success.

GEORGE H. BARBOUR

VICE-PRESIDENT AND GENERAL MANAGER, THE MICHIGAN STOVE COMPANY, DETROIT, MICHIGAN

The requisites of a good salesman, in the opinion of the writer, consist largely in his personality. There

are other requisites, of course, but one taking the position of salesman and representing a line of goods (I care not in what particular line) must have a certain personality, especially if he is a stranger to the merchants he is to meet, so that he may leave the right impression.

I am one who believes, to a greater or less extent, that the qualifications to produce a good salesman must be born in him, the same as the talents of a professional man, such as a musician or actor. He must feel an interest and like his work. If he succeeds, he must leave the correct impression on his first visit; and if he fails to get an order, this impression will be lasting, and sooner or later he will succeed in doing business with the merchants he calls on.

He must at all times represent the line of goods he has just as it is, so that when the merchant receives the goods he has ordered from him, he will find them just as represented and fully up to the recommendations made by him. If he fails in this, he will never succeed in continuing business relations with any merchant to whom he misrepresents.

He must be upright, honest, and reliable in every respect, and the success of the salesman must be along these lines. He must, at the same time, be straightforward with the firm he is representing. It is a great mistake for him to become too extravagant in his expenditures. I do not believe in a salesman trying to be economical by stopping at cheap hotels, just the

reverse; for he should always endeavor to assist his business by stopping at the leading hotels; he should make the acquaintance of those who are his equal, and those representing large concerns, men who are holding high positions and demanding the highest respect of the merchants with whom they do business. In this way one salesman can often assist another.

Another very important point for the salesman representing any concern is to live up to his instructions to the letter of the law. Many houses have their own ideas as to the way their goods should be marketed, and instruct their salesmen along these lines; and the salesmen should carry out these instructions to the letter and never depart from them unless in their experience they find certain conditions can be improved by so doing, and then they should explain them to the house they represent.

His main aim should be to succeed, and not only benefit himself, but the firm he represents. He should take sufficient time to accommodate the convenience of the merchants with whom he expects to do business; not to hurry them in any way, but arrange his time to accommodate that of the buyer.

There is one thing the salesman wants to do, if possible, and that is to leave just the right impression, which is sure to give him the preference, so that when he again visits the town the merchant will await his coming, give him the orders and a preference over

other salesmen. This is a strong point, and one that will tell in the end.

I have endeavored, in a condensed form, to give you some ideas on this subject. I could go into details more fully, but believe I have said sufficient and given sufficient ground, which, if followed by any salesman, will bring success to him if he has the natural ability to make him a good and profitable salesman.

CHANDLER W. SMITH

MANAGER, WHOLESALE DEPARTMENT, HENRY F. MILLER AND SONS COMPANY, PIANO MANUFACTURERS, BOSTON, MASS.

In starting out to become a salesman one must be honest and have an honesty of purpose in order to acquire REAL SUCCESS.

That word "Success" is a broad one, and is interpreted in different ways. In order to impress the importance of this firmly upon your mind, I am going to give you an illustration:

Not long ago I was visiting a large Western city, and as I went to the hotel dining-room for my breakfast, I bought a morning paper. I was informed that it was the largest and most reliable of all the papers published in that city. Prominent, on the first page, was an obituary notice of a man who had been the managing head of an enormous corporation, and enjoyed the reputation of being one of the brightest and most able

men that our country possessed. On the editorial page of that paper I read a two-column article giving the history of his business life. The article gave him credit for his accumulation of many millions of dollars, and then criticised him right and left for his unfair and unprincipled business methods.

I believe that article voices the sentiment of every honest person who was familiar with the business career of that great financier, and it should be a warning to you and stand out prominently before you as a danger signal labeled "Failure!" It should impress upon your mind that there is something else besides the accumulation of the Almighty Dollar to constitute a truly successful business life.

You should have implicit confidence in the goods you are selling, and treat your customers as you would like to be treated in return. You should study human nature, as hardly any two customers can be handled successfully by the same method. Obtain the confidence of your customers by taking a special interest in them. Recommend to them the article that you yourself know will be the most satisfactory, and be sure that you are giving your customer full value for money received.

You should be courteous and polite at all times and under all circumstances, and if possible take more pains with your customers after the sale than before. You should never sell an article for a higher price than it is marked to be sold for, thinking that by so doing

you will gain the good will of your employers. If you do, and your employer is honest, he will insist that you refund to your defrauded customer the full amount of the over-charge, and inform you, with emphasis, that if the act is repeated it will cost you your position. I know of no truer saying than the following quotation: "First of all to thine own self be true, and it will surely follow as the night the day thou canst not then be false to any man."

You should familiarize yourself with the qualities of your competitor's goods, but never speak ill of your competitor or his goods. That custom is too often adopted, and the result is like the gun that kicks backward, does more harm to the salesman than to the competitor. You can employ every moment of the time that your customer can give you to much better advantage by explaining the merits of the goods you are selling.

Be sure your customer understands fully the conditions of the sale. If interest is to be charged, see to it that your customer fully understands that fact, the rate of interest, and when it is to be paid.

Remember that there is nothing more annoying to your employer, or harmful, in fact, than to have a dissatisfied customer.

I have only submitted a few fundamental principles of salesmanship. If what I have said will be of any assistance to you, my efforts will not have been in vain.

In closing, I want to impress upon your mind that "Truth is a Divine Attribute and the Foundation of Every Virtue."

HUMPHREY O'SULLIVAN

TREASURER, O'SULLIVAN RUBBER HEEL COMPANY; PROPRIETOR, THE MERRIMACK CLOTHING, LOWELL, MASS.

You ask me how to describe the ideal salesman. The ideal salesman meets you with a glad hand, if he knows you; if he does not know you, he greets you, and while he is entertaining you in conversation he is digging through your mind, — who you are and what you want.

The ideal salesman! To be a salesman to-day means to be a gentleman first, of resourcefulness, intelligence, and tact; and, while I do not claim any of those accomplishments, I have been a salesman for over a quarter of a century and I know whereof I speak.

A salesman! In my estimation, a salesman is born and not educated. Every great success in this country represents as its head a salesman. If he were not a salesman, the firm would not be a success.

There are more salesmen in name than in fact. All that I can write upon the subject of "Salesmanship" is to tell each one who intends to be a salesman:

Throw your entire heart and ambition into the busi-

ness with which you are associated. If you cannot do that, you are simply a machine.

You must master and remember every article that is in your department. If you are "classy," and if you really understand the business that you are associated with, you will have to sell your customer the highest class of goods in your department, because of the manner in which you describe the goods and the interest you show to your customer. Cheap goods sell themselves, but it requires a salesman to sell high-class goods.

Salesmanship consists, first, in kindness, honesty, and politeness; next, in making the customer understand that the goods that you have for sale will benefit him to own them. And when I say that, it tells the whole story of salesmanship, in advertising or selling. The man, who does not carry out this plan, fails. You need to make the other fellow think, either by talk or print, that you have something that it would benefit him to own.

Selfishness! Do not tell him that you want him to get anything because you want to sell it, but tell him that he should buy it because it will benefit him to own it. The man who knows his stock, and has his heart in his business, will sell the goods; but he must not show by his action to the customer that he wants to sell, that he is hungry to sell. His cleverness will come in by making the customer believe that he ought to own what he has for sale.

DAVID M. PARRY

President, Parry Auto Company, Indianapolis, Ind.; Ex-President, National Association of Manufacturers of the United States and The Carriage Builders' National Association

There was a time, not long past, when the "drummer" was generally accepted as a common rogue. To-day he must be a gentleman in the truest sense. Then he swapped drinks and hot stories; to-day he passes out engraved cards and discusses the psychology of the trade. The problem now before him is that of a dual existence, a sort of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde life confronting him, whichever way he may turn. And, unless he is blest with the best in man's makeup, he is doomed to a double rôle, for on the one hand he protects his personal interests along with the employer's, and on the other hand he protects the customer's interests to get more business.

Now you can see how impossible it is to fill this dual position when things begin to conflict. Everybody lied whitely. The salesman made claims for his goods that were based more on eager desire than on fact. The customer begins stretching the truth from the point where the salesman left off, and in the Divine Law of Compensation gets everybody into trouble. Then it is up to the salesman to adjust affairs to the

satisfaction of the employer or he loses his job, and to the satisfaction of the customer or he obtains no more orders. And the devil laughs while our salesman flips to the advisability of jumping from the frying pan.

Right here I want to suggest the substitution of the Truthful Triangle for the Square Deal. Place the employer, the salesman, and the customer on the points of an equilateral triangle, the sides of which shall be bounded by lines of truth, and you have demonstrated the only methods business can ever follow. Turn the Truthful Triangle whichever way you will, and you have always the same proportions. The salesman knows for certain that the sides which support him, one leading from his employer, the other from his customer, are equal as respects Truth. He gives out his facts accordingly.

So our salesman must not only be a gentleman, but he must be a veracious one. His funny stories and red bottles are mildewing on the shelf where good judgment had grown so dusty. Just good, honest horse-sense is all the employer wants. My experience selling goods on the road soon taught me that before I could ever succeed I must have ability to control myself. One customer wants to take a drink with you, another a smoke; this one desires dinner at your expense; that one a theater ticket. Though the customer expects this as his due, yet the employer will not carry this extra expense, while the salesman cannot.

I soon discovered that if I avoided beginnings there

was not the continual worry. "Habit at first is but a silken thread. Beware! that thread may bind you as a chain." Habit, little by little, slyly and unperceived, slips in the foot of her authority, but having established it, she then unmasks a furious and tyrannic countenance against which we dare not raise our eyes. Providence smiles kindly on the salesman who guards himself and his employer from these impositions. You see the customer is trying to spoil our Triangle by acquiring greater length to the side he represents. And the strength of figure means, "Together we succeed, divided we fail."

Now I have piled obligations on our salesman until he is an honest gentleman of habits. He is paid money to hold down second base on the Truthful Triangle, and there we have him smiling out friendly sunshine and glowing with faith in his goods.

EDWARD W. POPE

Ex-Treasurer, Pope Manufacturing Company, "Pope-Hartford" Automobiles and "Columbia" Bicycles, Hartford, Conn.

The question is often asked, Can a salesman be successful and always tell the truth? Some men tell the truth because it is right, and, therefore, need no advice. Others think it sometimes pays better not to tell it, and it is to the latter class that I appeal.

My experience in business of over forty years has en-

abled me to observe many instances where a business house has built up a reputation, and kept it, because it would not allow its salesmen to deceive their customers. I remember discussing the matter with a man who admitted that he deceived his customers. I asked him if he thought it paid, and he replied, "Yes, I think it does. There is a sucker born every minute, and I can find plenty of them." But he did not succeed, for his customers not only did not return, but they told their friends, and the result was that his trade dropped off and he went out of business.

Another very common mistake is to run down your competitors' goods. If you cannot speak well of them, say nothing. Many a salesman has lost his customer by doing it, as the average man believes in fair play and will favor the "under dog."

Usually a salesman must make his customer's acquaintance, and sometimes his friendship, before he can sell him; and he would certainly be very unwise to resort to deception and thereby lose all he had worked hard to gain.

Methods of doing business have changed greatly since the department stores adopted the return of goods not satisfactory. This plan made it not only unnecessary to deceive, but to do everything possible to satisfy the customer, which, of course, includes telling the exact truth. This change has affected many other kinds of business.

If a business house or corporation intended to make

all the money it could in a few years, and then go out of business, it might pay it to let its salesmen misrepresent; but, as a rule, fortunes in business take nearly a lifetime to build, and, in the long run, if not in the short one, it pays to be truthful.

If the manufacturer is truthful through his manufactured articles, of course it is easy for the salesmen to be truthful in selling them. If the manufacturer makes a dishonest article, then the salesman should not pledge himself to sell it.

It takes a long time to make a reputation for a manufactured article; it requires constant watchfulness to keep it; and it is very easy to lose it. It is just the same with a salesman's reputation.

FRANK S. CHICK

Vice-President, The John H. Pray and Sons Company, Wholesalers and Retailers of Carpets, Boston, Mass.

A salesman's best asset is knowledge of human nature.

The great salesman is an even balance of knowledge of human nature and of his business, but, of the two, the former is the more important.

Out of this equipment, and two good-sized "Don'ts," salesmen are made.

Don't talk too much; be a good listener.

Don't make mis-statements.

Of course, I presume that you are going to be polite and decent, for you have to have these to make friends with even a yellow dog. How much more are they necessary when you have something "really worth while" in hand?

I have known of successful salesmen who took a drink when they liked, and smoked in a customer's face, whether the customer smoked or not; but I have known far more who did not, and somehow or other this latter class are about longer and keep out of the graveyard.

It is about all summed up in good manners, good-nature, and good sense.

ROBERT J. MIX

MANAGER, ORDINARY DEPARTMENT, NEW YORK CITY OFFICE OF THE PRUDENTIAL INSURANCE COMPANY OF AMERICA

That the salesman should be thoroughly familiar with his wares, that he should understand human nature, that he should know when he has talked enough, that he should be neat and cleanly as to his person, — these are facts that are patent to everybody. The statements are axiomatic. Therefore, in this brief article, let us take higher ground, let us look for a moment at the moral side of "Salesmanship," for no man can be called a good salesman who achieves temporary success at the expense of the RIGHT.

It is of the utmost importance that the reader should agree with us at the outset that the ability to dispose of a large quantity of goods does not necessarily make a man a good salesman.

One who misrepresents his goods, or induces his customer to purchase under a misapprehension of the terms of the sale, is not a good salesman, no matter what the size of his orders; he's a bad salesman, and a bad salesman is not only an undesirable employee, but he is a most objectionable citizen, for he tends to undermine that which lies at the foundation of all good salesmanship and real prosperity, namely, public confidence. One salesman who has sold a bill of goods through the practice of deceit or misrepresentation of any kind makes trouble for all the good and honest salesmen who come after him.

Goods which are not sold on their merits had better never have been sold at all, for the sale is of no ultimate benefit to the concern that the salesman represents, and no business house or corporation can afford to retain in its employ what is commonly known as a "slick" salesman, one who resorts to trickery of any sort with customers.

It cannot be denied that a salesman is frequently confronted with the temptation to take advantage of the customer's ignorance, but it is a temptation which must be resisted, if the salesman expects to make healthy and lasting progress in his vocation. By adhering rigidly to the truth, he may occasionally lose

a sale; but, on the other hand, he has no chickens coming home to roost, he has no dissatisfied customers. He can look men in the face, conscious of his integrity; he will gradually, but surely, build up a reputation of the right sort, a reputation for reliability; he will be known as a man whose word is as good as his bond, and, if he is industrious, he may feel assured of success.

The salesman should be a man of smiling countenance and a kindly heart. Human nature loves sunshine, and customers like to trade with the man who wears a smile and who breathes the spirit of geniality. Is it not so with you, reader? Have you not often visited a store in which you have declined the proffered services of a number of clerks in order that you might be waited upon by a particular salesman who had won you over by his painstaking, good-natured manner, and by the apparent truthfulness of all his statements? Of course, you have, and if this is true of you, it is true of others. It is true of practically all of us.

A good salesman will never make slurring remarks about a rival concern, nor will he permit himself to sell a customer more goods than the customer needs. The man who makes either of these mistakes has done more harm than good to the house which he represents, he has done something which may result in the loss of that customer's trade for future years.

Finally, and in general, honesty in the broad sense, honesty of purpose as well as honesty in practice, is

not only the best policy for the salesman, but it is the only policy which he can follow if he expects to become a "good" salesman.

P. A. BEST

MANAGER, SELFRIDGE AND COMPANY, WHOLESALE AND RETAIL MERCHANTS, LONDON, ENGLAND

Industry. First of all you must have the desire to do well; you must bring into this business all that is best in your home training. You must be industrious, for in the ideal condition that I am imagining there is no room for idle people, and every moment that is wasted by each individual is a great loss of time and opportunity.

Honesty. You must be honest in all that you do and say, scorning to be untruthful, having far too much self-respect to be dishonest in the slightest detail. It is dishonest to take away from this store, or to use for your own purpose, without permission, the least expensive of the supplies that are from time to time provided for your various departments or sections to wrap merchandise in or for you to use in the discharge of your duties. The pen that is supplied to you is not your own property; the string that you use for tying parcels must not be used for your own purposes. All these little points help to build up scrupulously fine characters.

Perseverance. You must be persevering, and al-

though it may be difficult for you to accomplish many things that you set out to do, if they are worth accomplishing, you must not lay them aside unfinished because you are not able to surmount the difficulties as soon as you would wish. The putting off of the completion of any task is always a dangerous thing to do. Do not procrastinate, for "Procrastination is the thief of time"; but the qualifications of perseverance will help you to keep trying until finally you must succeed in doing that which you are attempting.

Thoroughness. You must be thorough: do not handle your duties in a light manner; do not be content with surface service, — *i. e.*, apparently doing the task that has been set you, — for this is not sufficient. Do it in such a way that you know it cannot be done better, — that is being thorough. If you have received instructions how to perform a certain task, endeavor to find even a better way than you have been told; — always be thinking of better ways and better means of carrying out your daily work. This is the cult of thoroughness, and will be one of the strongest factors in your business success.

Punctuality. "Punctuality is the soul of business," for the care and forethought which make you careful to be punctual are the very essentials that will carry you through other duties. If the morning is foggy, leave home that much earlier, so that you may be able to catch the train that leaves before the one you usually catch. Abhor excuses, and endeavor to be

independent of even climatic conditions, for by studying this you will be placing yourself under self-discipline, which will make the more serious tasks that you will have to face when you get older very much easier to accomplish.

Courtesy. Be courteous, for there is nothing that appeals to that which is best in us more than the courteous and kindly treatment we receive from those associated with us or with whom we come in contact. A pleasant smile, a kindly manner, will often win where sterner methods fail. It is good for each individual to cultivate this attribute, for it is one of those that in the practice brings as much gratification to those who acquire it as to those who enjoy its influence.

Cleanliness. It is hardly necessary, perhaps, to remind you that cleanliness in person and habits goes hand in hand with the characteristics that up to the present time I have enumerated as being essential to bring about an ideal condition under which to work.

Loyalty. Loyalty is the groundwork of good service, for one cannot give faithful service and discharge those obligations that every one undertakes when accepting employment, without being loyal. Do not talk about your house of business or criticise it in any manner, except you do so in the interests of the business and to those whose positions of authority enable them to accept and deal with the criticism in the manner to which it is entitled. The business demands

from you that same loyalty that you should show towards your parents' house. If you were to see in the conduct of your household any action of any individual member that was displeasing to you, you surely would not speak to your friends or neighbors and criticise this fault, you would immediately go to one of your parents and make a criticism; but to make this to those not connected in any way with your home would be an act of disloyalty. Therefore, the same applies to the business house, for this is your business home, and as long as you accept service in it, the house has a right to demand from you unswerving loyalty.

Imagination. Another characteristic which, if properly cultivated, will assist to make an ideal condition possible, is the cultivation of imagination. "Imagination sets the goal, and industry and perseverance are the stepping-stones that carry us towards it," and so set your goal as soon as you commence your business life. Do not be afraid of aiming too high, for as sure as you set your goal so will you endeavor to find ways and means of achieving the tasks that you have laid before you. Let every one look to the highest places on the management, and then let it be his daily endeavor to so conduct himself in the discharge of his duties that he may be gradually laying the foundation stones on which ultimately to build a successful business career whose final goal at least shall be the best post that the house can offer him. Imagination finds

new and better ways of doing things. If you cultivate the habit of thinking, your imagination is its nearest partner. Be constantly thinking of some new way of using the systems of the house. Try to imagine another method for charging up merchandise other than the sales-book. Who knows but that it may fall to you to revolutionize what is to-day the most important item in the transaction of any retail business, the use of the sales-book; but unless you exercise your imagination, and are constantly thinking how much better you could do things, you will not be likely to achieve this desired distinction.

Discipline. I would like to emphasize the necessity of strict discipline being maintained by all ranks, — in any organization and in any sphere whatsoever, — for not only is it necessary that discipline, which means unhesitating obedience to those in authority over us, faithfully discharging all orders and instructions received, respect of rules and regulations and strict obedience to same, but there is a discipline thrust upon us by Nature, the respect of which means health, for even with our own bodies we cannot ignore the laws of Nature which urge us to be obedient to its discipline, and whatever part of Nature we look to we find the same discipline is insisted upon, and any breach of this always brings ultimately its automatic punishment: therefore, in a business it is vitally necessary to its well-being that all members should readily maintain the chain of discipline from the highest down

to the lowest. I, myself, have never forgotten the twelve months that I was privileged to be under the discipline of the regular army in South Africa, and I can fully appreciate that without discipline an army would become a rabble, — useless for attack or defense. There is nothing unmanly in the implicit obedience that the discipline of the army insisted upon from me, because I appreciated its necessity; and so I wish you to appreciate the absolute necessity of your maintaining strictly and unhesitatingly the discipline of the house.

Personality. Personality is an influence exercised by one individual over his fellow creatures. It is difficult to define, yet it is easily felt. It is the effect upon our minds of an individuality that appeals, attracts, and exercises an indescribable influence. Let me use the life of individuals, who possess this charm of personality, who are known to you if not by sight at least by reputation, people of whom you have read if not seen. Let us take the personality of our late King: the influence that he wielded was the influence for peace. He was not aggressive; he was called by our friends in the United States the First Gentleman in Europe. He won for our Empire treaties and peaceful relations with Great Powers, that in my opinion will be before long mighty factors in retaining for us the proud possessions that we hold to-day. At a time when the French nation and ourselves were in no way on a friendly footing, King Edward went to Paris,

and, by his wonderful personality, the charm of his temperament, paved the way to what very soon afterwards became a complete and friendly understanding between the two nations.

Now think what it would mean if every one connected with our house, by the close study of these attributes that I have set forth, by honest endeavor and determination to take the fullest advantage of his opportunities to-day, were to build up each his own individual personality! We should have an organization that would indeed become a national institution.

R. A. WALKER

Sales-Manager, A. Shuman and Company, Manufacturers and Retailers of Clothing, Boston, Mass.

The fatal obstacle which bars thousands of retail salesmen from advancement and large success is the deadening rut of commonplace daily habit, both physical and mental.

The man who falls into a rut, without the grit and stamina to force himself out, is surely doomed. He not only becomes machine-like in his thought and action, but eventually narrows his mental horizon until it is bounded by the closing bell and the weekly pay envelope.

Thus he entirely loses the ability even to form the

mental picture of success which must precede the actual performance.

Every retail salesman worthy of the name does certain important things:

He studies his stocks and keeps them in perfect order.

He is courteous to his customers, while using all legitimate means to make every possible sale.

He is regular in his hours and careful in all details of his work.

But these things, excellent in themselves, will never give him the high unusual success we all desire, — for if he is content with simply doing the usual things well, he is in danger of being benumbed by daily custom and of slipping into the rut of daily habit.

To keep out of the rut he must do the unusual things:

He must strive for originality.

He must suggest, if possible, improvements of methods, new arrangements of stocks and departments.

He must make all hours business hours; doing personal missionary work continually to increase his list of customers.

He must take infinite pains.

For example, — if he has definitely promised to deliver goods at a certain hour, the man who is keeping out of the rut will personally make sure that those goods leave the shipping room as promised.

There are a thousand and one differences of this

kind between the unusual man and the good routine man, and the salesman who successfully strives to lift himself above the ordinary, and to keep himself out of the rut, will reap the resulting benefit just as surely as light follows darkness.

P. V. BUNN

MANAGER, MAIL SERVICE DEPARTMENT, JOHN WANAMAKER, DEPARTMENT STORE, NEW YORK CITY

The word "Salesmanship" has been written so many times, and by so many pens, that I hesitate to comply with your request to tell you what it means to me. When I got your letter I pulled out Volume "S" of the Century Dictionary as a starter, and I was surprised to find no mention of the word in that book! On the other hand, dozens of writers have told what salesmanship is and how it may be acquired.

But the more I hear, and see, and read of salesmanship, the more I feel that *hearing*, and *seeing*, and *reading* of it will never *create* it.

Now, treatises covering the details of salesmanship are good things, but the student should remember that he can never make a salesman of himself by any instructions from the *outside* unless the real desire and determination to do so have been created *within* himself, and *by* himself, and *for* himself; and if a man has well and truly done that, he will need mighty few written rules to go by. It depends so much, — as in

most every activity in life, — on that sixth sense, that *Grasp*, which only one in ten seems to possess.

Take a counter salesman in a big store, for instance: Did you ever go to the same counter three times without knowing thereafter just which salesman you preferred to have wait on you? And yet the selected one may have seen the least service of any. But he *started right;* he was personally anxious to please you, — he was glad to see you; he had looked forward to your coming, and had prepared himself for it. He had learned more about his stock in three months than some of his mates ever would learn. And if you asked a question that he could not answer, he showed real solicitude about it; he let you feel that it was a *proper* question to ask, and he hurried to the aisleman and got the information; and you went away feeling a warm glow in your heart for the way he had treated you, and a resolve to trade with no one but him at that counter in the future. And, to-day, you would walk ten blocks out of your way to deal with that salesman.

The point I am making is this: That clerk had more *Real Salesmanship* in his cosmos, without ever having heard the word defined, than the majority of the experienced ones, even though they may have learned "by heart" all printed or written rules on the subject.

Our man started right by *longing to be a success*, and with the knowledge that the customer must be pleased, and satisfied, and gratified.

Salesmanship means the art or science of convincing another that it would be to his interest to exchange his money for whatever commodity the salesman has to sell.

The qualities that make the salesman deal with you in a way that gratifies you, all combine to make the salesman's *Personality;* that is the one word that best defines the true basis of salesmanship. But that word means so much; it means Tact, Gentleness, Sympathy, Interest, Enthusiasm, and Intelligence, all coupled with Good Business Common Sense. But if you are unfortunate enough not to have a goodly share of those qualities, you will never be a *real* salesman; in which event, if you insist on being a salesman anyway, you will have to fall back on the written rules as your sole equipment.

After we agree, then, on what must be the *basis* of success, no harm can come from studying the details of language and gesture, and certain psychological principles, which will give finish or polish where they would fail to create.

A good actor must study his "business," even after having demonstrated that he has the personality necessary to be a good actor; but the "business" alone would make him a very poor actor.

When we get into the field of these details, there are thousands of them. But the most important thing to learn is never to try to sell a thing that you do not believe in yourself, because *Sincerity* is bound to be

felt. Without it you lose your own self-respect, then your confidence, and then your success.

In the next place learn that even a crank can keep on talking, but that it is the wise man who knows when to stop.

The salesman who can so adjust himself as to be able to hang on to his "prospect" to the finish, without boring or making him mad, is bound to succeed.

GEORGE C. WARREN

PRESIDENT, WARREN BROTHERS COMPANY, CONTRACTORS OF THE "BITULITHIC PAVEMENT," BOSTON, MASS.

NOTE. — Although Mr. Warren's article appears to refer largely to the selling of pavements, it covers in reality the entire field of selling commodities to towns, cities, counties, and states, — a class of business which has assumed enormous proportions and is growing very rapidly. What Mr. Warren says about pavements applies to almost everything sold to other than business houses.

There are few commodities, the successful selling of which requires more high-class representation, more sound business judgment, and more varied qualifications than street pavements. Each customer is the whole taxpaying public of a municipality, with all the varied opinions its members hold.

The successful salesman should not only thoroughly know his own pavement but the various competitive pavements. He should have sufficient knowledge of engineering and municipal contract law to be able, as he is often required, to advise municipal engineers,

attorneys, and other officials, to the end that all proceedings shall be in strict accordance with the law and best practice.

Contrary to what the writer believes to be the popular idea on the subject, there are few lines of business in which competition is more keen and in which the salesman has a better opportunity to display his genius and exercise his mental activities. He should have a generally pleasing address and be able to converse understandingly on general topics of the day and to meet men and women in high as well as low stations in life and to be "at home" with all. He should be able to intelligently converse with the individual or address a public meeting in a manner which carries conviction with what he has to say.

All pavements have merit. Most pavements have some features in which they excel all others. All things considered, some are best for some conditions of traffic and other physical conditions, and others best for other conditions. It is a part of the essential duties of the salesman to quickly perceive the conditions and determine whether or not his pavement is most suitable for any particular case and be as frank in advising that another pavement be used if better adapted for the street as he is insistent that his pavement will give the most satisfaction under conditions for which it is best adapted. Intelligent consideration and prompt action on the part of the salesman on this important point avoids getting himself and employer committed

to undesirable propositions. Salesmen are apt to feel when they frankly acknowledge that a pavement is not best for any condition that the public and competitions will seize on that as an acknowledgment of general inferiority. In the writer's judgment and experience frankness in such, as in other matters, yields the best results in the long run.

To enable him to answer argument and intelligently answer questions, the salesman should be familiar with the merits, demerits, and history of all kinds of pavement and paving materials, and while vigorously presenting the merits of his own material, he should be careful not to exaggerate and over-state them, and equally careful to be fair to his competitors' wares. Above all, he should avoid "knocking" or unduly referring to the misfortunes of a competitor. Uniform perfection in any engineering construction is impossible, and when, as they often do, salesmen have more to say against a competitor's than about their own product, they generally create a lack of confidence in the minds of the customers, who, as a rule, do not care to hear what a salesman has to say against a competitor.

A part of the qualifications of the successful salesman is to have a general knowledge of the laws and customs in other cities and to advise what form of law and method of assessment is best and safest. It frequently happens in cities, which have not done paving before, that either the city attorney, engineer, or other official starts something irregular in the form of proceedings,

assessment, specifications, or contract, which, if consummated, would endanger the legality of the whole proceedings and contract. The salesman must know what is right and what is wrong, and then, most diplomatically, call attention to the error and advise how to correct it. He must know enough of finance to be able to intelligently advise the taxpayers and officials how to proceed, — how other cities do it.

The salesman should studiously keep out of partisan politics. He needs the friendship of all, and, even under the enticement of temporary advantage, should avoid making enemies for the future by becoming a partisan in politics.

If the salesman represents a bituminous pavement, he must know sufficient of the chemical constituents and physical properties of bitumen, both as to his own and that of his competitors, to intelligently represent his material.

The best thought in street construction of the last seventeen years (the life of patents) is generally represented by patents. If the salesman happens to represent a patented pavement, he must have a generally correct knowledge of the fundamental principles of patent law, and also of municipal law with respect to its application to patented articles in connection with the general laws regarding competition.

In many places payments to paving contractors are made in municipal bonds or assessment liens. When contracts provide for cash payment, the ability of the

municipality to meet its obligation often depends on the salability of its bonds. A first-class salesman, therefore, should have added to his other accomplishments a good knowledge of finance and real estate values and should investigate these matters to the end that he does not load his employer with a lot of unsalable securities or contracts on which he cannot realize the contract price.

As stated above, few businesses are subjected to more keen and aggressive competition than the street-paving business. This may not be so as to any particular kind of pavement, but all kinds of pavements are sharp competitors of each other. The representatives of all are keen for the business, — a condition which necessarily regulates the prices and quality of workmanship. Except in very extraordinary cases, one cannot get an exorbitant profit for his work, and if he attempts to do so he will find his competitors "on the job" with another kind of pavement, perhaps not so good but answering the same general purpose at so much lower price that the exorbitant profit man will find himself "in the cold."

The salesman should not only be able to advise on matters referred to above leading up to the construction of pavements, including the materials to be used; laying out of the street, including lawns, parkways, shade trees, etc.; but also how to care for the pavements, — how to economically clean and repair them, after they are laid. He should be well read and up-to-

date on all matters pertaining to his and his competitor's business and able to hold his own in any public or private argument on the subject.

Finally he should be a "hail fellow well met," always sober, industrious, and economical, but not penurious in his expenses. When a salesman is noticed to be extravagant in his expenses and mode of living, the public quickly reaches the conclusion that the profits of the business must be excessive, however erroneous the conclusion may be and however difficult it may be for his employer to meet the expenses out of the revenues from the business.

F. P. SEYMOUR

SALES-MANAGER, L. E. WATERMAN COMPANY, MANUFACTURERS OF FOUNTAIN PENS, NEW YORK CITY

Advertising has lessened "the strength of the cry" from the drummer of old to the salesman of to-day. In the process of standardizing products of manufacture salesmen also have become standardized.

The successful salesman of to-day must be a well-read, forceful, honest, polished man, who can meet intelligent dealers on the basis of assisting them to increase their annual business. "Ways and means salesmen," or those with the creative force, have taken the place of the drummer, who formed his acquaintance with a dealer, supplied his merchandise at the highest price possible, shipped it into his dealer's store, and then

left him stranded to dispose of his stock to the best of his ability.

Price standardization has left little opportunity for salesmen to supply goods at more favorable prices than might be first quoted. With the purchase price and the retail selling price regulated, the margin of profit is established, as is done with the leading staple lines of to-day. The salesman's effort comes extensively to the front, then, to make the dealer's business sufficiently large to afford a desirable trade on a fixed profit.

Advertising *has* regenerated salesmanship, but has not minimized the importance of the selling department.

We look for greater changes in the era of salesmanship in the next decade than in the last.

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